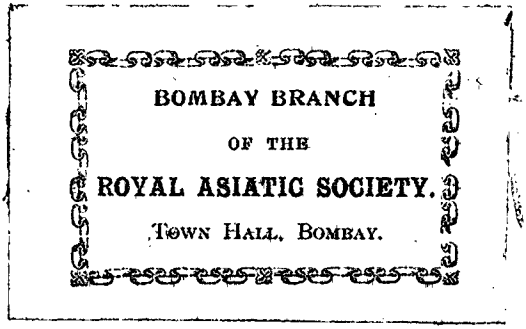
00099657

NOT TO BE ISSUED OUT
WITHOUT PERMISSION.



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016

Gen
928.942
mallet
9957

THE

LETTERS

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH MONTAGU,

WITH SOME OF THE LETTERS OF HER CORRESPONDENTS.

99657

PART THE SECOND,

CONTAINING HER LETTERS FROM THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE TO FORTY, ENDING WITH THE CORONATION OF GEORGE THE THIRD.

PUBLISHED BY

MATTHEW MONTAGU, ESQ.

HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

VOL. III.

NW 14

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND;

BY W. BULMER AND CO. CLEVELAND-ROW, ST. JAMES'S.

1813.

00099657

MRS. MONTAGU'S LETTERS,

&c.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Allerthorpe, October 26th, 1744.

DEAR COUSIN,

I HAD the favour of your kind letter this morning, and resolved to return immediate thanks for it, that I might have a kind of right to such another. You see the grounds of human gratitude, it is one of the social virtues; that is, a duty towards another practised for the good of himself; but, however, believe me to be grateful as the generality of my species, but if I excel in any particular, it is in loving my friends. It is no wonder

that a mind weakened and bowed by affliction seeks to support itself by the assistance of others; but in my happiest hours, and when the delusions of life (for I call the happiness of this world no better) were strongest upon me, I thought friendship had high and noble pleasures. I am pleased with what you say of my Duchess; I think she is an honour to our sex, and a happiness to her friends. Every thing of this world is of a mortal nature, but I hope our friendship will not cease to exist till we do. What you say of the other person gives me concern; I really love her, but if I find by you that she does not deserve it, I will endeavour to withdraw my esteem; for a false friend, or even a slight one, is a dangerous thing. True and faithful affection is a pearl not to be cast before the profane. I wish you had hinted your reasons; but I will wait till I see you, and in the mean time my affection will be balanced between the loadstone of inclination to find her right, and the attraction of your opinion, which in

things we have conversed upon has had such force of truth as to draw mine. What an abominable vice is hypocrisy! it often makes falsehood appear amiable, and teaches us to distrust truth; it has perhaps made me take this woman to be good, and may make me suspect some better person of hypocrisy. I have often observed that the generality of young people are madly credulous, and old ones injuriously suspicious, which arises in the first from indolence and rashness, in the latter it is the effect of timorousness, and of having been often deceived. The natural shocks that flesh is heir to, are so many, it is inexcusable in mankind to add to them by their ill treatment of each other. Happiness opens the heart to benevolence, affliction softens it for pity. Heaven grant that however my heart may be afflicted, it may never be corrupted! and as I should abhor deceit in myself, I would avoid it in others. I am fortunate in some friends, (and I hope you will know I reckon you as one of them) whose hearts I know full of inte-

grity. I am sure you will think it must have been a great consolation to me to have discovered all those virtues in Mr. Montagu which adversity needs, and adversity only can shew. I never saw such resignation and fortitude in any one; and in the midst of affliction there is comfort in having such a friend and assistant. It was once my greatest happiness to see him in possession of the dearest of blessings; it is now my greatest comfort to see he knows how to resign it, and yet preserve the virtue and dignity of his temper. He went to London on Tuesday, about some business that required his immediate presence. If the Parliament sits early next month I shall go to town in a few days.

I am, dear Sir, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind

Dover-street. 1745.

DEAR SIR,

I AM in doubt whether to thank you for your letter, or chide you for your departure; the first gave me much pleasure, the latter a great deal of regret. To show you that while you are bounding your ambition to making your family happy, others have different views. I will tell you what strange things are doing in our political world. My sister sent you word of the comedy at St. James's, and the *exeunt omnes* of our ministry, and all their adherents. An interlude was played by Lord Granville, and the famed Earl of Bath, Lord Carlisle, and Lord Winchelsea; but, to act exactly according to the rules of criticism, their theatrical performance was confined to the space of twenty-four hours; at the expiration of that time they made their exit, and the Pelhams, and their followers, are again on the great stage. It seems the ministry

To the Rev. Mr. Freind

Dover-street, 1745.

DEAR SIR,

I AM in doubt whether to thank you for your letter, or chide you for your departure; the first gave me much pleasure, the latter a great deal of regret. To show you that while you are bounding your ambition to making your family happy, others have different views. I will tell you what strange things are doing in our political world. My sister sent you word of the comedy at St. James's, and the *exeunt omnes* of our ministry, and all their adherents. An interlude was played by Lord Granville, and the famed Earl of Bath, Lord Carlisle, and Lord Winchelsea; but, to act exactly according to the rules of criticism, their theatrical performance was confined to the space of twenty-four hours; at the expiration of that time they made their exit, and the Pelhams, and their followers, are again on the great stage. It seems the ministry

my story with the beginning of Faulconbridge's soliloquy, in King John, " Mad world! mad kings! mad composition!" The Dutchess of Portland is just gone from me; she is very well now, but has had a great cold. The Dutchess of Leeds is dangerously ill, but not without hopes of recovery, though the newspapers say otherwise. The town is very sickly, and the disorder among the cattle does not abate. There are rumours that we have been beat in Scotland; but, I believe, they are owing to the fears of the weak or wishes of the wicked, for I cannot hear any grounds for them in fact.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Tunbridge Wells, the 27th, 1745.

DEAR MADAM,

I WAS very agreeably surprized with your Grace's letter, and a visit from our friend, who is so variously dignified and distinguished. He will give you a good account of the hurly-burly he found me in amidst boxes, trunks, portmanteaus, and all travelling incumbrances. He will tell you also how his ears were entertained with nailing and cording of boxes, and all the fracas one could possibly make for a journey to Tunbridge, which we performed very well the next day. Your Grace has seen the place, so I shall not say any thing of it in general, but only as to the company here at present. We cannot complain of want of numbers, for all nations and sects contribute to make up our complement of people. Here are Hungarians, Italians, French, Portuguese, Irish, and Scotch. Then we have a great

many Jews, with worse countenances than their friend Pontius Pilate, in a bad tapestry hanging. In opposition to these unbelievers, we have the very believing Roman Catholics; and to contrast with these ceremonious religionists, we have the quaint puritans, and rigid presbyterians. I never saw a worse collection of human creatures in all my life. My comfort is, that as there are not many of them I ever saw before, I flatter myself there are few of them I shall ever see again. I have great joy in Dr. Young, whom I disturbed in a reverie; at first he started, then bowed, then fell back into a surprize, then began a speech, relapsed into his astonishment two or three times, forgot what he had been saying, began a new subject, and so went on. I told him your Grace desired he would write longer letters; to which he cried Ha! most emphatically, and I leave you to interpret what it meant. He has made a friendship with one person here, whom, I believe, you would not imagine to have been made for his bosom friend. You would, perhaps,

suppose it was a bishop, a dean, a prebend, a pious preacher, a clergyman of exemplary life; or if a layman, of most virtuous conversation, one that had paraphrased St. Matthew, or wrote comments on Saint Paul; one blind with studying the Hebrew text, and more versed in the Jewish Chronicle than the English history; a man that knew more of the Levitical law, than of the civil, or common law of England. You would not guess that this associate of the Doctor's was—old *Cibber!* Certainly in their religious, moral, and civil character, there is no relation, but in their dramatic capacity there is some. But why the reverend divine, and serious author of the melancholy Night Thoughts, should desire to appear as a persona dramatis here I cannot imagine. The waters have raised his spirits to a fine pitch, as your Grace will imagine when I tell you how sublime an answer he made to a very vulgar question; I asked him how long he staid at the Wells? he said, as long as my rival staid. I was astonished how one who made no preten-

sions to any thing could have a rival, so I asked him for an explanation; he said, he would stay as long as the sun did. He did an admirable thing to Lady Sunderland;* on her mentioning Sir Robert Sutton, he asked her where Sir Robert's Lady was; on which we all laughed very heartily, and I brought him off, half ashamed, to my lodgings; where, during breakfast, he assured me he asked after Lady Sunderland, because he had a great honour for her; and that having a respect for her sister, he designed to have enquired after her, if we had not put it out of his head by laughing at him. You must know, Mrs. Tichborne sat next to Lady Sunderland; it would have been admirable to have had him finished his compliment in that manner. I am preparing for the ball. I am just come from riding, which is something for me to do, in a place where one groans under the pains and penalties of idleness. I beg my best respects to my Lord Duke; my

* Lady Sunderland was married to Sir Robert Sutton; Mrs. Tichborne was her sister.

sister hopes you will accept of her's; and I flatter myself, you sometimes remember

I am entirely your's,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge-Wells, Sep. the 3d, 1745.

MY DEAR LADY DUTCHESS,

I AM extremely happy in Dr. Young's company; he has dined with me sometimes, and the other day rode out with me; he carried me into places suited to the genius of his muse, sublime, grand, and with a pleasing gloom diffused over them; there I tasted the pleasure of his conversation in its full force: his expressions all bear the stamp of novelty, and his thoughts of sterling sense. I think he is in perfect good health; he practises a kind of philosophical abstinence, but seems not obliged to any

rules of physic. All the ladies court him; more because they hear he is a genius, than that they know him to be such. I tell him I am jealous of some ladies that follow him; he says, he trusts my pride will preserve me from jealousy. The Doctor is a true philosopher, and sees how one vice corrects another till an animal, made up of ten thousand bad qualities, by "th' eternal art educing good from ill," grows to be a social creature, tolerable to live with. Your Grace orders me to give an account of spirits, appetite, and all the articles of my constitution. As to the first, they are good enough to laugh at very little jest, to be pleased with indifferent entertainment, and not to be unhappy in dull company; as to the second, I can eat more buttered roll in a morning than a great girl at a boarding-school, and more beef at dinner than a yeoman of the guards; I sleep well, and am indeed in perfect health, and the waters have done me much service. I had, just now, a letter from Mr. Montagu, in which he

tells me he leaves his brother, to whom he made a visit in his way to the north, on this day, and proceeds towards Newcastle; he tells me he met Dr. Courayer at Dunstable, travelling with Mr. Stanhope; he has all the virtues, and almost as much innocence, as would qualify a man for Paradise, and to walk with angels, like our first parents. The little Doctor loves London better than the country. He has not only virtue enough to keep himself from the contagion of vice, but to venture to be the physician, too, of the infected, and the friend of the infirm. It is a hard case that your Grace forgets your correspondents for your Bantam fowl. Though I have not my head so well curled as your Friesland hen, nor hold up my head like your upright duck, do you think I consent to be laid aside for them? Of all fowl I love the goose best, who supplies us with her quill; surely a goose is a goodly bird; if its hiss be insignificant, remember that from its side the engine is taken with which the laws are registered, and history

recorded; though not a bird famous for courage, from this same ample wing are the heroes' exploits engraven on the pillar of everlasting Fame; though not an animal of sagacity, yet does it lend its assistance to the precepts of philosophy; if not beautiful, yet with its tender touch in the hands of some inspired lover is Lesbia's blush, Sacharissa's majesty, and Chloe's bloom, made lasting; and locks, which, "curled or uncurled, have turned to grey," by it continue in eternal beauty; and will you forsake this creature for a little pert fowl with a gaudy feather? That merit is little regarded now-a-days, I knew before, but little expected to find your Grace in that disposition. If I don't hear, in a post or two, that you have got an university of goslins, I shall really take it to heart. For my part, I look on them as the worthies of the age, they are impartial historians, unprejudiced philosophers, the great promoters of learning, and assistants of the belles lettres; and, if they fall into good hands, produce things that are admirable. You will say,

perhaps, that while I praise them I give you an instance of the impertinence of one of them; but know, Madam, what I write with is a chicken's feather, made into a pen by a stationer's apprentice; the first would never have been a goose, nor the second a man. From the figure of the pen, and its maker, I feared it would scrawl, and be flippant. Sure, when my stationer's youth comes to perfect monkey's estate, he will ape man's works better, else he will starve as a journeyman. I vow this writing engine is more like a tooth-pick than a pen; pray let it make some excuse for my bad writing; it is a pen fit for making apologies, for it is sure to commit a fault the first syllable it attempts.

I am your Grace's, &c. &c.

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Tunbridge, 1745.

DEAR MADAM,

I HOPE your Grace is sensible I should write oftener if it was consistent with drinking these waters; but really it is very inconvenient to apply a head to any business that cannot think without aching; I am not singular in this, for many people affirm thinking to be a pain at all times; I have more discretion than to declare as much any where but at Tunbridge. I have been in the vapours these two days, on account of Dr. Young's leaving us; he was so good as to let me have his company very often, and we used to ride, walk, and take sweet counsel together; a few days before he went away he carried Mrs. Rolt (of Hertfordshire) and myself, to Tunbridge five miles from hence, where we were to see some fine old ruins; but the manner of the journey was admirable, nor did I, at the end of it, admire the object we

went to observe more than the means by which we saw it; and to give your Grace a description of the place, without an account of our journey to it, would be contradicting all form and order, and setting myself up as a critic upon all writers of travels. Much

> Might be said of our passing worth,
> And manner how we sallied forth;

but I shall, as briefly as possible, describe our progress, without dwelling on particular circumstances; and shall divest myself of all pomp of language, and proceed in as humble a style as my great subject will admit.--First rode the Doctor on a tall steed, decently caparisoned in dark grey; next ambled Mrs. Rolt, on a hackney horse, lean as the famed Rozinante, but in shape much resembling Sancho's ass; then followed your humble servant on a milk-white palfrey, whose reverence for the human kind induced him to be governed by a creature not half as strong, and, I fear, scarce twice as wise as himself. By this enthusiasm

of his, rather than my own skill, I rode on in safety, and at leisure, to observe the company; especially the two figures that brought up the rear. The first was my servant, valiantly armed with two uncharged pistols; whose holsters were covered with two civil harmless monsters that signified the valour and courtesy of our ancestors. The last was the Doctor's man, whose uncombed hair so resembled the mane of the horse he rode, one could not help imagining they were of kin, and wishing that for the honour of the family they had had one comb betwixt them; on his head was a velvet cap, much resembling a black saucepan, and on his side hung a little basket. Thus did we ride, or rather jog on, to Tunbridge town, which is five miles from the Wells. To tell you how the dogs barked at us, the children squalled, and the men and women stared, would take up too much time; let it suffice, that not even a tame magpie, or caged starling, let us pass unnoted. At last we arrived at the King's-head, where the loyalty of the Doctor

induced him to alight, and then, knight-errant-like, he took his damsels from off their palfreys, and courteously handed us into the inn. We took this progress to see the ruins of an old castle; but first our divine would visit the church-yard, where we read that folks were born and died, the natural, moral, and physical history of mankind. In the church-yard grazed the parson's steed, whose back was worn bare with carrying a pillion-seat for the comely, fat personage, this ecclesiastic's wife; and though the creature eat daily part of the parish, he was most miserably lean. Tired of the dead and living bones, Mrs. Rolt and I jumped over a stile, into the parson's field, and from thence, allured by the sight of golden pippins, we made an attempt to break into the holy man's orchard. He came most courteously to us, and invited us to his apple-trees; to shew our moderation, we each of us gathered two mellow codlings, one of which I put into my pocket, from whence it sent forth a smell that I uncharitably supposed to proceed

from the Doctor's servant, as he waited behind me at dinner. The good parson offered to shew us the inside of his church, but made some apology for his undress, which was a true canonical dishabille. He had on a grey striped calamanco night-gown, a wig that once was white, but, by the influence of an uncertain climate, turned to a pale orange, a brown hat, encompassed by a black hatband, a band, somewhat dirty, that decently retired under the shadow of his chin, a pair of grey stockings, well mended with blue worsted, strong symptom of the conjugal care and affection of his wife, who had mended his hose with the very worsted she bought for her own; what an instance of exalted friendship, and how uncommon in a degenerate age!

How rare meet now such pairs in love and honour join'd!

When we had seen the church, the parson invited us to take some refreshment at his house, but Dr. Young thought we had before enough trespassed on the good man's time, so desired to be excused, else

we should, no doubt, have been welcomed to the house by Madam, in her muslin pinners, and sarsenet hood; who would have given us some mead, and a piece of a cake, that she had made in the Whitsun holidays to treat her cousins. However, Dr. Young, who would not be outdone in good offices, invited the divine to our inn, where we went to dinner; but he excused himself, and came after the meal was over, in hopes of smoking a pipe; but our Doctor hinted to him that it would not be proper to offer any incense, but sweet praise, to such goddesses as Mrs. Rolt and your humble servant. To say the truth, I saw a large horn tobacco box, with Queen Ann's head upon it, peeping out of his pocket, but I did not care to take the hint, and desire him to put in use that magnificent piece of furniture. After dinner we walked to the old castle, which was built by Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, in William Rufus's days. It has been a *most magnificent* building; the situation is extremely beautiful; the castle made a

kind of half moon down to the river; and where the river does not defend it, it has been guarded by a large moat. It is now in the hands of a country squire, who is no common sort of man; but having said so much of the parson, I will let the rest of the parish depart in peace, though I cannot help feeling the utmost resentment at him for cutting down some fine trees almost cotemporary with the castle, which he did to make room for a plantation of sour grapes. The towers at the great gate are covered with fine venerable ivy.

It was late in the evening before we got home, but the silver Cynthia held up her lamp in the heavens, and cast such a light on the earth as shewed its beauties in a soft and gentle light. The night silenced all but our divine Doctor, who sometimes uttered things fit to be spoken in a season when all nature seems to be hushed and hearkening. I followed, gathering wisdom as I went, till I found, by my horse's stumbling, that I was in a bad road, and that the blind was lead-

ing the blind; so I placed my servant between the Doctor and myself, which he not perceiving, went on in a most philosophical strain to the great amazement of my poor clown of a servant, who not being wrought up to any pitch of enthusiasm, nor making any answer to all the fine things he heard, the Doctor wondering I was dumb, and grieving I was so stupid, looked round, declared his surprize, and desired the man to trot on before; and thus did we return to Tunbridge Wells. I can give your Grace great comfort in telling you Dr. Young will be with you in a week's time. The Dutchess of Manchester is very high in my esteem; she has most generous qualities, delicate sentiments, and an expression that does honour to them.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most affectionate,
and obedient,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, Oct. 1745.

DEAR MADAM,

I AM afraid my friend condemns me as a negligent correspondent, and, indeed, I own the charge too true. It was some years before I found out that writing letters was but a better kind of idleness, and a civil sort of impertinence; but the longer we live in the world the wider the social engagements spread; and the more business we enter into, the more we learn to esteem our own leisure, and respect that of others. I have been, of late, a very remiss correspondent, but not the more careless or forgetful friend; my health has of late required so much care, and such continual exercise, that my hours have been too much dedicated that way; indeed, by doing my utmost not to die, I have hardly lived. Tunbridge waters seem to have made me as well as ever I was in my life, and I had entirely recovered my spirits, till these unhappy

disturbances in the north alarmed me. Mr. Montagu was at the meeting at York, where every one largely contributed to the raising and arming the people; and I hope the precautions taken will put an end to this very threatening and approaching destruction. I find the Yorkshire gentlemen think it better to stay in the country, than to abandon it at this time of peril; and, though it gives me uneasiness and anxiety, I cannot wish those I love to act otherwise than consistently with those principles of honour that have always directed their actions. I left Tunbridge Wells last Friday sen'night; the waters were so beneficial to me I was loath to quit them; but the weather growing cold, it was time to leave a place that is never tolerable but in sunshine. The first stage we made was luckily so near Lord Westmorland's, that we had an opportunity of seeing his fine house. It is built in the Italian manner, and the figure so unlike our houses here, you would take it for a fine public building. The rooms within are finished in the

highest taste that is possible, and furnished with all imaginable elegance; the apartments are magnificent, and there is something so grand, and at the same time so cheerful, in the house, that it seems to reconcile what are thought seldom to dwell under the same roof, greatness and tranquillity. It is pity the hostile powers of civil rage should ever violate this elegant retreat; but at such times all are enveloped in the common ruin, and no greatness, elegance, strength, or ornament, are left to any one but what resides in their own mind, from whence no human force can drive it. How much is it, therefore, worthy every one's care most to cultivate what they are surest to continue to possess. I rejoice that the worthy possessor of Mereworth has a good retreat in his own virtue, in case of any public or private misfortune. But how different is it with many of our professors of taste, who adorn their houses, improve and cultivate their gardens, and every thing about them, and leave nothing waste and rude but their

minds, nothing harsh and unpolished but their tempers; raise temples of honour to virtues and powers every where but in their own hearts, where there is no trace of respect and regard for any thing noble and worthy. If you had come to Tunbridge I should have had great pleasure in your company; we had a very agreeable little party; and, as prudent people should do, through life, troubled ourselves no farther about the crowd than not to give them any reasonable cause of offence.

I am your Grace's, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, Oct. 23, 1745.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE every day, since I came here, had the pen in my hand to write to your Grace, and as constantly have been prevented. I find by your letter, you ima-

gined me, before this time, in the great city, but behold me still at a quiet fireside in the country. Mr. Montagu's being of the association in Yorkshire detained him there, and it was but the beginning of this week he proposed to be in town; and some affairs he had to transact not being finished so soon as he expected, he will not arrive in town till to-night. Your Grace will say I am a most undutiful wife not to attend him there, but my mother is so loath to part with me that I have, instead of my personal appearance, wrote a very earnest invitation to him to come hither, if there is not any business in Parliament that requires his attendance. If he cannot come hither I shall set out the day after I have his letter that tells me so. I own I was very uneasy at his being in the north, in such a bad neighbourhood as that of the rebels, but he thought it not right to leave the country while in confusion, as the country gentlemen were then useful in contributing their money and care to defend it. He says they are

now very easy, and out of all danger, as our regular forces are assembled, and I hope all will again be settled in tranquillity and peace. I heartily wish Mr. Montagu may come hither, for my mother is not, I fear, quite in good health; but this I would not have mentioned, lest she should hear 'I thought she had any appearance of the same complaint as last year; she seems herself to suspect a little, but has the greatest submission that can be to all-disposing Providence. I hope she may live many years, but I think it necessary she should pass her time cheerfully, as that is thought particularly advisable in her case. My sister stays with my mother till after Christmas, and then they all come to town, where they will stay four months this year, of which I am glad, as the best advice may be had. I have brought a notable constitution from Tunbridge, and very good spirits; I think myself as well as I could wish to be, as to health. Tunbridge is very good for bodily infirmities; as to the weakness and faults of the mind, I cannot recom-

mend it. One leads but an idle and irrational life; however, it is not a very disagreeable one. There is variety of company, and consequently some agreeable people; as for the others, if one has but good humour enough not to displease, or be displeased with them, it is sufficient. All pages of human life are worth reading. The wise instruct, the gay divert us, the absurd cure the spleen, the imprudent shew us what to shun, the vapoured teach us that reasonable employments, and sufficient exercise, are necessary to keep the frame of mind and body in order; and, in short, it cannot be unprofitable to converse with human creatures, of whom even the imprudencies teach us experience, and whose thoughtlessness gives occasion to reflection. It is true the study of human kind is not so pleasant as that of other animals, where all seem apparently to act for the end they were made. A slumbering minister seems not to fulfil his round of life as well as the restlessly industrious wheel animal we saw in Mr. Baker's microscope,

an improvident family may not be compared to the prudent ants, a nation at variance in itself, is not so happily amicable as the community of bell animals who so worthily require a microscopical attention; but however individuals may seem to thwart the end of their being, in general all contribute to the universal good. If we saw only the wheel part of the animal, how should we laugh at a creature made but to turn? and ask, to what purpose so much motion? But it is a subject of which we can discover the whole, and we see a heart whose blood is fed from the little milk, and limbs nourished by it. And thus it is with the whole body of human-kind; classes of people make up the members; some are the wheels, and some the claws; we rail at these as restless, at those as rapacious, and so on. Could we see the entire economy we should then declare how all conspire to the great end, and learn not to despise any part of so excellent a constitution. It is not possible almighty wisdom can make any thing that does

not tend to a wise end, and it is a good way to reconcile oneself to those we think fools, to look upon them as some way to be a part of wisdom, though unhappily the connection be invisible to us. So instead of a microscope, that considers only minute objects, take a moral and physical telescope, look over the whole creation of intelligent beings, and you will be reconciled to every part of them. Your Grace frequently complains of the conversation of a certain person who is not wise; I own the conversation of a simpleton is a grievance, but there the disparity of a wise man and a fool often ends. When passions have their sway (too often strongest in the brightest minds), Dame Reason's fundamental laws are as much broken by the one as the other: there is nothing stable in human nature. Folly sometimes has a fit of prudence, Wisdom often a fit of folly; but I own there is great difference in the conversation of the different sorts of persons; and though it may sound imprudently, I think a fool is almost better to

be trusted as an agent for our business in the world, than to be endured as a companion in our solitude, for we see unwise people grow very rich, even at the expence of the ingenious. But if I have weakly defended these unhappy dull people, pray let me enjoy that charity I would procure for them. I am, with the most affectionate wishes, and sincere and grateful regard, your

Grace's most obedient,

E. MONTAGU

To the Same.

Nov. 19th, 1745.

MADAM,

I AM at a loss what to say in excuse for myself, and fear your Grace has condemned me as very idle. While my mother was with me, I was unwilling to leave her alone, even for a moment; and since she left me I have been in a con-

tinual hurry of visits. The learned faculty have given us better hopes of my mother's case than I could have expected; they say it is not yet cancerous, and that it may be many years before it hurts her. Your Grace was excessively good in sending me the receipts, which I have sent her, and also the walnut medicine. I wish I had any agreeable news to send your Grace, but really we hear none that can rejoice us. Carlisle is surrendered to the rebels, who, I hear, behave civilly, and not as conquerors. Their success, no doubt, has raised their spirits. A party of Marshal Wade's took their quarter-master prisoner; who behaved with great spirit, said they might hang him as soon as they pleased; the Marshal asked him if the Pretender designed to fight them; to which he answered, yes, and to beat them too. Ligonier is still ill; the Dukes of Richmond and Bedford are set out. Lord Sandwich is aide-de-camp to the Duke of Richmond. I pity poor Lady Sandwich, she endeavours to bear up, but certainly she is in an uneasy situation; I saw her

on Sunday, and she is to dine here to-morrow. Her ladyship enquired after your Grace. I suppose you know Sir Francis Dashwood is upon the brink of matrimony. I see him sometimes with his intended bride, Lady Ellis; he is really very good company. She is ill at present, but, I imagine, as soon as the writings are finished, and she recovers her health, they will be joined in wedlock's holy bands. Lord Rockingham has been extremely ill, but, it is hoped, he is something better this afternoon. He has gone through all the severities of physic. There is a new poem come out called Harmony; I would have sent it your Grace, but that I do not think it would entertain you; the poet seems to have the machinery of poetry but not the spirit of it; he forgets no poetic fable, but intermixes them with his philosophy, so that he contrives to make his system obscure, and his work very tedious. I think this is not a season for the Muses; those delicate ladies will not visit us in such turbulent times; Bellona's trumpet

will drown the gentle lute and harmonious harp; the men are all become military, and the ladies politicians. I do not like such times; I wish we had our peace, our whisk, and our vanities, as last year; that by the word Drum we understood a polite assembly, and by a Rout only an engagement of hoop-petticoats. I have not heard of any assemblies since I came to town; and indeed, I think, people frighten each other so much when they meet, that there is little pleasure arising from society. The murrain amongst the cows is another misfortune; it grows very general about London. I should think your young angels, when they take food after the manner of mortals, should rather prefer water-gruel to milk-porridge; for one does not know how soon this disease may spread into the country, and the milk is reckoned to be poison. I find the Dutchess of Manchester is in town. Have you heard any thing lately of what was talked of at Tunbridge?

I am, your Grace's, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Dover-street, Nov. 26th, 1745.

SIR,

I HAVE so long omitted to write to you, that I am now almost ashamed to do it; but as I know my cousin and you to have angelic dispositions, I think you will receive the sinner that repenteth. There has been such a chasm in our correspondence that I don't know where to begin to enquire after you, or to give you an account of myself; though, by my sister, I believe, we have had pretty good information of each other; and that you know I have recovered my health and spirits at Tunbridge, as I have had the pleasure of hearing of Mrs. Freind's and your welfare at Bath. These first concerns being settled, let me ask what you think of the situation of public affairs? Alas! what a scene of confusion, and how melancholy a change, since I had your last letter, when peace spread its olive branches over the land! If we took

any part in foreign wars it was voluntary, and we could retreat when we pleased; the desolation occasioned by war was in countries strangers to our knowledge, and almost to our pity; but now we are now contending for visionary greatness and chimerical honour, but for our religion, laws, liberties, the enjoyment of our property, and the shelter of our habitations. Our adversaries were lately our fellow-subjects, and brethren of our community, to whom we have given, and from whom received the aids of society, and benefits of mutual intercourse, and have lived with them in all the social civilities of life. If their blood be shed it must fall on that very earth from whence they might have claimed support, and though they may deserve no pity, they can plead for it in the language of our country. I hope we are secure of victory and a speedy conquest over these cruel invaders of their country's peace; by the most authentic accounts of their forces, I think we have not much to fear from them; but it is strange that this

great and powerful kingdom should be shaken by the attack of a few straggling banditti. Lord Lonsdale writes to the ministry that their numbers are but 3500. They are well disciplined and regular, I believe, for temperance and patience are the virtues of poverty, and few of them have known plenty and the wantonness of heart, and dissoluteness of manners it is apt to inspire. The winter marches have, I fear, hurt our troops, but they are said to bear them with cheerfulness on this important and pressing occasion. Mr. Wade is said to be at Burroughbridge, and the Pretender at Manchester. Lord Lonsdale has burnt a great stock of hay and corn-ricks about his house, that they might not nourish rebellion, a very handsome sacrifice to his country, and the more so, as people of the greatest rank here have been endeavouring to make the utmost advantage of the unhappy state of their country, and have sold the assistance it was their duty to give. Self-interest has taken such firm possession of every breast, that not any threatening calamity can

banish it in the smallest instance: there is no view of the affair more melancholy than this. It is terrible to see people afraid to trust each other on this occasion; every thing is turned to a job, and money given for the general good, is converted too much to private uses. There was yesterday great rejoicing among the mob upon a popular rumour of the Pretender's brother, Edward, being taken in the transport-ship, but that is unhappily not true, but a ship coming to the Pretender with succours from France is taken; they had sent him over several officers, and Charles Ratcliffe, brother to the late Lord Derwentwater, is with them; so he will have the honour to die for the same cause for which his brother suffered. It is strange the first example did not cure this family infirmity; it is the worst kind of King's evil. The Duke of Cumberland set out yesterday, as did the Duke of Bedford and Lord Sandwich; the Duke of Montagu gave his lordship one of his regiments. Almost all our nobility are gone to the army; so that

many of the great families are in tears; and indeed it makes the town appear melancholy and dismal. Let it be said, for the honour of our sex, there are no drums, no operas; and plays are unfrequented; and there is not a woman in England, except Lady Brown, that has a song or tune in her head; but indeed her ladyship is very unhappy at the suspension of operas. Your acquaintance, Mrs Hammond, I hear, is in high spirits. Lord Suffolk's son, Mr. Thomas Howard, is recovering from the small-pox. My poor sister is to stay in the country till after Christmas; is not that grievous?

I am, dear Sir,

your most sincere friend, and affectionate cousin,

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Freind.

1746.

DEAR MADAM,

E tender hand of a friend does all in
e power of human art to heal the
vounds given by affliction. That you
and interest yourself for me,
t, on a casions, give me comfort.
is not consistent with duty or pru-
lence to be ever considering one's loss
vith those circumstances of tenderness
hat make one unable to bear up against
it, so I will say as little as possible of the
dear and tender parent, and endeavour
o recollect her only as a most excellent
voman, and try to become good by her
mple. She concluded with an heroic
onstancy the most virtuous life; from
r prosperity she drew arguments of
signation and patience, and expressed
he greatest thankfulness that Provi-
lence had lent her so many blessin

without repining that they were to be taken away. How few are they that do not grow proud and stubborn by that indulgence which made her humble and resigned! She had spent her life in doing those just and right things that bri[ng] peace at the last; and after living many years in the world, left it with t[he] greatest innocence of soul and integrit[y] of heart I ever knew. How mu[ch] supe[-] rior is this to the forced and unn[a]- rious innocence of a sequestered cloist[er] for after having bent to all the dutie[s] of human life, she had not contracte[d] any of the vices or bad affections of it nor had she the least tincture of th[e] secret faults of malice or envy which often lurk about the hearts of those wh[o] are esteemed persons of unblameabl[e] conduct. Through every action of he[r] life she deserved to be loved and esteem[ed] and in her death to be almost adored for in that scene she appeared almo[st] more than human. But this subject is [t]o affecting; nor can I as yet think of

my final separation from such a friend with the resignation I ought.

I beg you would think favourably of a journey to Sandleford; you cannot imagine the pleasure it would give me to see you there. We are still roasting in this ty town, but hope a very few days ll carry us into the country.

I am dear Mrs. Freind's
most affectionate cousin,
and sincere friend,
ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

1747.

MY dearest Lady Dutchess's letter did not arrive till long after I had wished to hear from her; however, as I had accounts of your Grace's and your family's welfare from my other correspondents, I did not feel the anxiety I should other-

wise have suffered. My long indisposition hindered my writing to any one, so that I am now an insolvent debtor, and though I write every day till I am so tired I can hardly hold up my head, I am still on the wrong side of the balance. Pray has your Grace read the m melancholy of poems, Mr. Lyttelto Verses on his Wife? I think they a extremely pretty; they describe a most delicate and tender affection. I must recommend to you Mr. Melmoth's tra lation of Pliny's letters; I think they will please your Grace; you will find sentiments of friendship and generosity that will touch a heart like yours: they are not in the epistolary style of modern letters, nor abound with turns of wit like French writers; but noble and elevated sentiments, and dignity of expression, will make up for the absence of little ornaments and embellishments. Your Grace will see how a great man was employed in the service of his country, and how engaged in domestic duties; his

lesire to acquire fame was not greater
han his endeavour to deserve it; he
gained the favour of his prince without
lattery, and used that favour to the ad-
vantage of his friends, and did not turn it
to the uses of pride, avarice, or luxury.
had before read a French translation of
ese letters, but, I think, Mr. Melmoth's
referable to it: and I was pleased to see
the noble Roman in a good English
habit. The generality of our English
translators work merely for bread, and
bring a great writer down to their homely
rank; Mr. Melmoth is a gentleman; he
was bred to the law, but was too much
an admirer of the Muses and polite
letters, and left an honourable and gain-
ful profession to retire into the country.
But, I suppose, that the world might not
think it was done merely through a prin-
ciple of idleness, he has given them a
proof that he has been conversing with the
fine geniuses of antiquity. I own it sur-
prizes me to see him dedicate his work to
a man who is the very opposite of Pliny,
and I was sorry to see names put together

whose characters so ill agree. There is a gentleman of the law to whom these letters might properly have been dedicated.*

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most obedient, and most faithful humble servant,
E. M

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

1747

MY MOST EXCELLENT, BUT MOST SILENT COUSIN,

IT is the hard hap of many an honest person to be forced to talk of themselves to avoid being forgotten; and, I find, it begins to grow necessary for me to tell you, you have a friend and cousin, Eliza, who lives in Dover-street. I have indeed had the pleasure of hearing from

* The Editor believes the person here alluded to, to be the Honourable Charles Yorke.

rs that you are well, otherwise I ld not have so long delayed making humble petition for a line to inform of your health. I hoped long before time to have been in the country, Scotch bills, and I know not what, e so delayed us, that the charming th of the year will be over before I t there. I have been often at Ranelagh nd Vauxhall, but I cannot think these avourite summer diversions make up for he neighbourhood of the noisy and usty Piccadilly. Though I hear people alking from morning to night, I do not emember that they have said any thing orth repeating; and for news I hear ot any. The press indeed has produced omething of late; Mr. Lyttelton's book eceives universal applause. I do not oubt but you have read it before this ime, otherwise I would send it to you. Ir. Warburton's Notes on Shakespear re most extraordinary; he seems to roceed by new rules of criticism, and nakes Shakespear speak as he pleases im, though ever so wide from his words

or seeming meaning; the word *mea*
changes for *medicines*, though the
such a difference in the orthogra
there could hardly be a mistake in
printing; but indeed, according to
vulgar phrase, he too often makes
Shakespear talk like an apothecary.
have been amusing myself this morn
with looking over this noble piece
criticism, and, among many flowers,
have gathered a nosegay, some of whic
I will send you, as I suppose you hav
been too wise to buy the book. In Rom
and Juliet, speaking of the friar, Shake
pear makes somebody praise his piety
benevolence, &c. and says, this friar th
city is much obliged to him; a commo
though not elegant manner of speaking
and more common in the province whe
Shakespear lived the first part of his life
but Mr. Warburton most sagaciousl
turns it thus: "This friar the city is muc
obliged to *hymn*. And to hymn is t
laud, and to laud is to *praise*;" and so, b
incredible pains, and a new verb, h
makes you understand the city shoul

aise the friar. In the Merchant of Venice, when a lady gives her friend joy on her marriage, and wishes her happiness, the lady answers again, "I thank you or your wish, and am well pleased to wish back on you." Mr. Warburton says, it uld be, "I am well *prised* to wish it on you, from the French *appris*, means instructed, and that the wish teaches her how to be civil," . In the same play, old Shakespear s, "Look how the floor of heaven is ck enlay'd with patterns of bright ld;" modern Mr. Warburton, "patens *f* bright gold;" patens means a border in heraldry, and the lid of a sacramental cup.

I am sorry so many industrious critics have not been able to make sense of one line they have so belaboured as that unhappy one in the song, "Blow, blow, thou winter's wind," which in Shakespear runs thus:

Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
"Because thou art not seen,"
Altho' thy breath be rude.

The formal critic, Sir Thomas Hanm[illegible] says it should be thus,

Thy tooth is not so keen,
Thou *causest not that teen.*

Mr. Warburton says,

Thy tooth is not so keen,

and why?

Because thou art not sheen.

Now *sheen* means *bright*, but the [illegible] mentator renders it *smiling;* and t[illegible] winter's wind being, no doubt, you kn[illegible] black, it was not sheen, so not flatteri[illegible] and therefore, certainly preferable to t[illegible] sheen enemy, and therefore not so bad a[illegible] man's ingratitude. In the fine speech o[illegible] the seven ages of man's life in As You Like it, Mr. W. makes Shakespear (in a note too long to give you) allude[illegible] the Italian entertainment of a pan[illegible]one, which, I believe, the author never thought of, when he gave the old man the slippers that fit him so well. One short note more I must give you from Love's Labour Lost; Armado to his page Moth, says, a[illegible] he goes out, "Moth, follow:" Moth replies,

"like the sequel:" this small jest used to content the gentle reader, but Mr. Warburton says, it should be "like the sequelle," which in French means a great man's train; and the jest," says he, "is, that a single page was all his train." What a jest, and what a commentator! I have, like a prudent person, filled my letter with another person's nonsense, and spared my own; but if you write not speedily, expect a very peevish scolding letter, the dictates of my angry mind. Can you not write without a text? and must we have none of your thoughts unless we will live at Witney and make blankets? Pray make my compliments to all your family, particularly to Mrs. Freind and my cousin Robinson, who is with you, I presume, by this time. My sister, and Mr. M. desire their respects.

I am, dear Sir,

your most affectionate cousin, and sincere friend,

E. Montagu.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Sandleford, the 12th of September.

DEAR MADAM,

IF you are as glad to hear from me as I am ready to write to you, you will not think me troublesome for addressing to you two posts together; but my last w so short I do not consider it as a letter this perhaps, may not have the fault o brevity, for if I have time I am sure t have inclination to write to dear Mrs Donnellan, in whose remembrance an affection I would contend for some share. I told you, in my last, I would give an account of our tour, so I must make you set out on the progress with me, and shall therefore insist on carrying you, in the first place, to Winchester, where we arrived on a Saturday evening. I know you will willingly accompany me to the cathedral on Sunday, and after that I desire you will give your attention to the building, which is of the neatest of th

Gothic kind, and rather grown reverend than old by time; there is to the choir an extremely fine screen of more modern structure, but in a still more ancient order of architecture, namely the Corinthian. Having considered what time has done to the works of man, let us see how it deals with the men themselves; the turbulent William Rufus lies here very quiet in a stone chest; in another place, of all the pride and ambition of Cardinal Beaufort there remains only a mitred monument; of the learned William of Wickham merely a brazen figure. The bones of Saxon kings, who fought bloody battles with each other for a less compass of land than a modern gamester will lose at a rubber at whist, lie quietly interred by each other, and their bones are contained in a chest not big enough to hold a fine lady's muffs and tippets. What an excellent arithmetician is death! He subtracts and divides till he sets all accounts even, and makes the sum total of the king and cobler equal. But enough of the dead, and let us pass on to those

who are still under the delusions of life; in the evening we saw Mr. Dummer's; for the pleasure we received there I thank you, as you informed me it was worth our attention; from thence we reached Southampton, of which I need not say any thing, as you know it better than I do; but pray let me ask if you ever went up the round tower, which, I think, commands the finest prospect I ever saw? We staid at Southampton till the tide was full, and then went to Lady Peterborough's, with which I was much charmed. Lord Peterborough, in a letter to Mr. Pope, speaking of this place, says "I confess the lofty Sacharissa at Stowe but am pleased with my own little Amoret;" He had reason to say so; Stowe, like a court beauty, is richly adorned, and set off with great cost and contrivance; nature is at all the expence for his Amoret, and has lavished on her charms that art can poorly imitate. From Mount Bevis we went to Lindhurst, to make a visit to Mrs. Medows; the forest was new to me, and I was struck with a kind of

awe at it; we are apt to respect even inanimate things to which time seems to have shewn a reverence. I could not help thinking the aged oak must look on generations of mortals as we do on people at a masquerade, who assume and lay by their character before they have time to learn their part. We spent one day intirely in the forest, on another we went to Hurst castle, which stands on a narrow beach that reaches to the sea, and is opposite to the Isle of Wight, where we could distinctly discover trees and buildings; another day we went to Beaulieu, a seat of the Duke of Montagu's; it was an ancient monastery, had great lands annexed to it, and seems to have been a considerable building. If the ivy could have spoken it would have told us many an old story; as it is, it is a venerable and silent witness of the antiquity of the place, which, by its situation amidst fine wood and water, is very beautiful. We went from Lindhurst to Salisbury, but were so late as to miss seeing Lord Folkstone's. You are acquainted with Salisbury

so I need not describe what I saw there; but I cannot omit that we received great civilities from the Bishop, and Mrs. Sherlock, and were invited to dinner by them, which favours we were intitled to only on account of being friends of Dr. Courayer. Mrs. Sherlock carried me with her to church, and the Bishop of Lincoln gave us an incomparable sermon. We could not have the pleasure of dining with the Bishop on account of going early to Wilton, where indeed I was much charmed. Such a river for such a bridge, and such a bridge for such a river! was ever any thing so delightful! then the fine hill, the rich valley, the noble town of Salisbury, and the eminent steeple! Do not all these things deserve a note of admiration? I know you agree with me in admiring this place. If one can leave so fine a garden for any thing, it must be to see so fine a house. As to the statues and bustos they are certainly very fine, but I think too many; heroes should not have so many competitors, nor philosophers so much company; a

spectable society may be increased into mob; I should, if they were mine, sell half of their figures to purchase their works, which are indeed the images of wise men; Plato and Anacreon, Cicero and Pindar, differ but little in features, but much in sentiments and language. We went from Salisbury to Stone Henge, which is indeed an astonishing thing; and every way one would account for it there arises an insuperable difficulty. We then went to Amesbury, where great improvements have been and are still making; the winding river is pretty, but the place is marshy and wet, and I think promises neither an improvement of health nor chearfulness. The front of the house looks very prettily on the outside; within there are but few rooms, only one good one, and that is regular, and is prettily furnished with Mr. Wootton's landscapes. From Amesbury we reached Marlborough early enough to walk in Lord Hertford's garden, with which Dr. Courayer was pleased as at seeing a sort of acquaintance, but it has

nothing in its aspect to recommend it to strangers; there is a mount in it of surprizing height, not raised to satisfy the curious eye merely with a prospect, but it has of old times been made as a military observatory, to watch the motions of an army. In our way from Marlborough hither we called at Lord Bruce's, which is situated in a kind of forest; the access to the house is very grand; you pass through an avenue of a mile and a half in length, with sometimes the opening of a fine lawn; the house makes little appearance on the outside, but it contains many fine rooms, richly gilt, well furnished, and adorned with many family pictures; but the place is rather great than agreeable. Are you not glad I am at the end of my journey? It is now time we should both take rest, but I must tell you that at Salisbury Dr. Courayer had the agreeable surprize of seeing Lord Feversham at the Bishop's; the Doctor was abashed, and his lordship shewed some little resentment; indeed, to go so near an old friend, and a new peer, and not

make him a visit, was not so well. Lord versham said he and his lady would ve been glad to have seen us at Down-on. I hope that before this time my brother Robinson has had the pleasure of seeing you. Dr. Courayer sends his thanks for the ring, but I fear he will find your advice impracticable, though this morning he had the douceur to say he was sorry my head ached. I should ind it more difficult to avoid what your notto directs than to obey it, so you may e sure of my fulfilling your commands n the amplest manner. Pray make my compliments to the family you are with; ccept those of all here, and particularly Mrs. Morgan's, who sits by me very pati-tly, and desires to be mentioned in the ost respectful manner.

I am, dear Madam,
your sincerely affectionate friend and
humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Sunday the 13th of Novembe

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR Grace, who is always indulgent to your friends, will easily pardon the omissions of a sickly correspondent. I am infinitely obliged to your kind concern for my health, and, to shew you that I am not obstinate, I am really preparing to go to Bath this week, and with le reluctance, as I have lately been severely ill. I suppose Lord Titchfield is by this time returned to school; my brothers tell me extraordinary things of his genius and industry: they go next week Cambridge, very happy, no doubt, to en into the world, which, in distant prospe appears well, and at their age they have little apprehension of the disappointments they may meet with. Hope, like other blossoms, puts forth fairest in the spring. I return your Grace thanks for your co gratulations on my brother's success;

carried his election for Canterbury very umphantly, but in speaking to the ople (for the corporation is very large) fatigued himself, and lost his voice for some time, and is now drinking Bristol water. I agree with your Grace in finding King James's Life very dull; he was a most royal pedant; his speeches, and his proclamations, were dictated by the goddess of Dullness; and what provokes one the more, is the high conceit he entertained of his foolish head; he thought himself equal to Solomon and superior to Queen Elizabeth; most enormous errors! and such as nothing but the breath of flattery could have blown up in his mind. I think the English history, from his time, grows very disagreeable. In some reigns the kingdom is in the most terrible confusion, in others, it appears mean and corrupt; in King Charles the Second's time what a figure we make with French pictures and French mistresses! But when our times are written, England will recover its glory; such conquests abroad, such prosperity at home, such prudence

in council, such vigour in execution, so many men clothed in scarlet, so many fine tents, so many cannon that do not much as roar, such easy taxes, such flourishing trade! can posterity believe it? I wish our history, from its incredibility, may not get bound with the fairy tales; and serve to astonish children, and make nursery maids moralize. One thing gives me great pleasure to reflect upon, as I cannot help being interested in the honour of the times we live in, and that is, that though some of our admirals, and many of our captains, have been suspected of heinous offences, yet they have all been acquitted, and proved innocent when the matter was nearly enough inspected. Then our friendship to dear dulcinea, the Queen of Hungary, most heroical; and indeed our unobserved fidelity to all our allies, is no little to be admired. I always honour the liberal character of Sir Timothy Treatall; it was good in a private person, but how great in a whole nation, and how fine would it appear on the theatre of the

world; scene the first, act the first, enter England Treatall; what next? why again England Treatall! and so on; noble Treatall for ever! Such a play can never be [illegible]d; Envy herself would never shake [illegible]cks at it. How will this noble dis[illegible]estedness outshine the narrow pru[illegible]ice, and unroyal frugality of Queen [illegible]izabeth! She gathered the fruit of the [illegible]ive, and forgot the noble leaf of the [illegible]rel; her low aim was to make her [illegible]ople rich and easy, by which she [illegible]rned half the kingdom to low mecha[illegible]ics, and scarlet and fine linen were to [illegible]e found no where but in her palaces; [illegible]deed, when she was at war she made [illegible]nething more than fireworks of it, [illegible] still she had the mean object of peace [illegible]er head, and had no taste for modern [illegible]y; and her attention to the useful [illegible]necessary was unprince-like. Ad[illegible]ty, and a private education, might [illegible] done something towards this, and it is [illegible]e can say to excuse her; and, to our [illegible]gular felicity, her successors have not [illegible]pied her in any of these political errors.

I was made very happy on Friday by hearing Lady Sandwich was arrived safe; it is mortifying to me that I must still lose the happiness of conversing with her; but I am rejoiced that she will in in England, for I could not endu think of her being in such circumst at a distance from all her friends, a amongst a set of people whom I shou not imagine the most agreeable or tende I shall write again to your Grace as s as I am settled at the Bath. This weath promises us a bad journey, and I a afraid we shall find the roads in thei worst condition. Mr. Montagu tells m he has heard charming things of Lor Titchfield, and which I think prom great future happiness to you. I r sincerely affirm I share your content; that every year may improve your ha ness is the most earnest wish of

your Grace's much obliged, affectio and faithful,

E. Mont

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Friday, the 24th of December.

DEAR DONNELLAN,

I WILL not add to my mortification in ot hearing from you, that of not writing o you. I am now better able to write than I have been of late; I am seldom very sick, nor have I the enjoyment of perfect health. I had the Love Elegies sent me down last post; my heart aches for the gentle fair mentioned in them; y, that lives in the tender delicate m, and gentle mind, cannot be absent m her breast. And there is so much e and happiness expressed as really st affect her. The men have always a t advantage over us, and particularly, Mr. Hammond says, they "may own graceful weakness of the heart." is to them an ornament, in our sex ooked upon in a worse light; and like other passions, spends itself ds; but sorrow, pent up in silence,

keeps long its mournful residence in the heart. It is a sign of the prepossession of one's own merit if that of another cannot make its impression, therefore I cannot see why a woman should be less respected for a sensibility to merit in one man who dedicates his attention to her. It is unhappy where people love each other much, and cannot marry; but while they do not marry any other person, I do not see any harm in it. The richest dowry is the gift of the heart, and no one ought to marry where they think they cannot bestow it. Love is the frailty of the fairest minds,

> And though its hapless case is falsely told,
> By the rash-judging young, and the ill-natured old,

yet among the best people it finds indulgence. I want to know what you think of these Elegies; they please me much, but between you and me, they seem to me to have something of a foreign air. had the poet read Scotch ballads often and Ovid and Tibullus less, in my opinion he had appeared a more n

writer, and a more tender lover. I assure you I admire the verses extremely, but if I had not known them to be originals I should have taken them for translations. You will laugh perhaps at my proposing Scotch ballads for an accomplished writer's improvement; but to me it seems there are no love-verses that seem suggested by the heart and softened in the language, like some Scotch songs. I cannot put Petrarch and all his stars, suns, and moons, in competition with them, when they do but attempt to describe their mistress, "like a lilly in a bogie." Artless beauty, simple manners, and soft wishes sound sweetly through the shepherd's oaten reed, while he warbles sweet his wood notes wild; but to the artful lyre, or high-sounding trumpet, gentle sighs and artless words do not so well agree; the string is sounded higher than the tone of passion, and sincerity seems lost in words of too high sense and studied meaning. If you differ from me in opinion I fear I may not have your judgment by which to examine my own

till we meet, for I desire you would no write when you are not well. I hope i will not be very long before I may come to town. I shall send Mrs. Percival some potted moor-game; I am mortified I cannot send her any more than a brace of birds, but they are so scarce I have not been able to get more at any one time, though I have endeavoured it these two months.

I am your's, dear friend, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

*** This letter should have been placed in 1743, as Hammond died in 1742, and the Elegies were published after his death.

To the Same.

Dec. 28, 1747.

DEAR MADAM,

I RECEIVED your kind letter just as I was in the hurry of my departure from Sandleford, so I thought it best to defe

writing till I could give you an account of myself from Bath. As to my journey I performed pretty well; the first day indeed I was taken ill on the road, and obliged to repose myself for some time at an alehouse; which, as the delice of the greater part of our countrymen, you would imagine no very bad place. My landlady was a very good woman, and, between comforts of mild and stale, grown to a comely size; she informed me her husband made malt, as well as brewed it; as soon as I grew better I desired to see the performance of that noble English manufacture, and was accordingly initiated into the mysteries of making malt. Content with my refreshment and instruction, I went forward with my journey, and performed it pretty well. The day after I came I consulted Dr. Hartley; he gave me comfortable words, said mine was a Bath case, would be cured by the waters, but medicines were improper and dangerous; and neither ordered bolus, draught, or electuary, or any of the warlike stores of the faculty. The waters do not

disagree with me, nor have I been ill since I came, in any violent degree. My spirits are not in the best order, which you will not wonder at when I tell you my brother Tom has a milliary fever; Dr. Wilmot does not perceive any danger at present, but cannot pronounce him safe till the fever leaves him; but by this post my brother Morris says Dr. Wilmot thinks the fever is rather abated. You will expect I should give you some account of the place, but I would fain defer it till I am in better humour; at present it appears to me very disagreeable. Here are many whom I know, but few whom I like; the rooms are very full of noise and whisk; as to the balls I cannot give any account of them, as they did not continue in the Christmas week. I wish Lady Sunderland and Miss Sutton may come here. We have here Miss Chudleigh, and a very pretty daughter of Lord Chief Justice;* but they are ill provided with beaus, so that it is scarce worth their while to be so handsome.

* Willes.

hen I have more spirits you shall hear rther from me; at present I am very stupid.

I am dear Mrs. Donnellan's
very affectionate friend and servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

January, 1748.

I AM sure so good and tender a friend will suffer for me in my present heavy affliction; and I cannot excuse myself if do not remove your uneasiness, as uch as I can, by telling you I bear it as well as can be expected. It is impossible not to feel under such a grievous circumstance; but I am composed and quiet, more than you would imagine. My poor brother's virtues and capacity gave me the fairest hopes of seeing him enjoy life with great advantages; a fatal

moment has destroyed those hopes, b
it must be length of time that can ma
me submit to the cruel disappointment;
he was an honour and happiness to us all,
and I never thought of him without
pleasure. Alas! how is it changed! But
it is our duty to bear these things; and
I have of late had too much acquaintance
with affliction, and with the loss of
those I loved. As to this good young
man, I hoped it would have rather been
his business to have grieved for me, so
uncertain is health and strength. I will
say no more at present. Adieu. My
sister is as well as can be hoped. Mr.
Montagu is most careful of us, and I can-
not, amidst my sorrow, help thanking
Heaven for so kind a friend.

I am ever your's,

E. MONTAGU.

*** Mr. Thomas Robinson, her second brother, died
of the effects of a cold caught by being overheated in
pleading before the House of Commons. He was a
young man so promising in his profession that Lee, then
Chief Justice of the King's Bench, exclaimed, "We have

To the Same.

Bath, March 14th, 1748.

R MADAM,

orry to find you have not yet re-
d your spirits; but we, of nervous
constitutions, are like ships that carry
too much sail, we are driven too fast and
too far by every gale; and cannot so
easily tack about, and fall in with every
incident, as those whose spirits are not so
violently borne away; which are of the
appiest disposition, will bear many an in-
ious argument, but never any absolute
ision; but could we know what was
to choose it would little avail, where
is no liberty to choose at all. But

e man in England for a point of law!" H
ise on Gavelkind still continues to be the standar
on that subject. In sprightliness of wit, a
y of invention, he much resembled his sister; h
y was stored with classical literature, his tast
gment were so refined, and so accurate, as
n Mrs. Montagu's recollection an indelible i
ion, and a regret which no subsequer
could sufficiently compensate.

am sure we owe one thing to ours
which is, to cultivate cheerfulness
objects and things in our power,
call every innocent amusement
aid, to converse with those we lo
such books as we like, and tak
pleasures as are proper. Weeds sp
without care and cultivation, but fruit
and aromatics must be planted and en-
grafted; pain and pleasure are in the
moral world as the others in the natural;
evil comes unsought, but happiness mus
be courted. How often do I wish myse
provided with wings to take a flight
perch on your chimney corner! I
very sorry poor Mr. Percival has ala
ou so often; if he does not suffer
he bad weather now I shall have
opes of him. I find myself every
rowing better; I bathed twice;
ontrary to what it used to do, it r
ny spirits and made me feel a gr
egree of chearfulness than I hav
ince I came to Bath; indeed
echanic helps, for my
God knows, is lessen

have many relations left, I reflect that
n this circumstance makes me more
ble to have the same affliction repeated;
t I will mention this no more; I should
ther endeavour to raise your spirits
han depress them; so to call a new sub-
ct:—Have you read the new French
called Le Méchant? You will not
he comic wit of Moliere in it, nor
conduct as to the plot, but I think
is a great deal of good sense and
lity; the méchant is a character one
uld not think had existed if one had
ot seen it: I fear it had been still better
had it been La Méchante; for the love
of mere unprofitable mischief I fear the
women are most noted; the men are for
any ill they can get by, and as they have
more ways of being bad, they are not so
dly s s the women. I think the cha-
cter of Valere, in the play, is not un-
on; a young person of good dispo-
n, but by the influence of bad
company made a knave for fear of being
a fool, would forsake the woman he loves
rather than be censured for constancy,

and disobey the parent he honours, fo
fear of being ridiculed for submissio
he speaks ill of people without malic
makes connections without affection, an
all this to conform to the maxims of his
bad companion; but as he is rather se-
duced than depraved, he is soon brough
back by Ariste, who says many th
that I think will please you, and s
the difference between what is true
what is plausible; and indeed the e
and misdoings of those who are not na
rally bad arise from not being able
distinguish in that point. I am very
sorry for the account you give of Miss
Southwell, but I hope when the spring
advances she will recover. Why did not
Lady Sunderland come to Bath for her
cholic? You are very good to
should not want any temptation
into Berkshire but what I and my litt
Sandleford could offer; I will flatte
self that Mr. Percival will be so we
to set you at liberty this summer. You
do not mention the little Père, he does
not write, and I want grievously to know

how he does. Mr. Montagu and my sister join in respects to you. I am always dear Mrs. Donnellan's

affectionate friend, and obliged humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Bath, 1748.

MADAM,

I THANK your Grace a thousand times for your kind letter; but why will my Lord Duke persevere in the gout? Pray tell his Grace it is a shame he should use a crutch while his grand-mamma trips like a roe-buck; she has been more than parboiled in Medea's kettle, and without the help of a Jason too, without which few dowagers look so smug. Mrs. Honywood has lost her new husband; the Fates will make her a widow in spite of her haste to be a wife. I hear the

Dutchess of Kent is still very ill. Pray do you know Mrs. Trevanion, Lord Berkeley of Stratton's sister? she goes away from us to-morrow, which I am sorry for; she seems very agreeable and well-bred, and has a thousand other good qualities that do not abound at our morning coffee-house, where I meet her. We are too dull here to furnish any news or scandal. Whisk, and the noble game of EO, employ the evening; three glasses of water, a toasted roll, a Bath cake, a a cold walk, the mornings. I cannot s I have yet dared to cast a hope towar London; my physician says three months will be necessary for me to drink the waters. My constitution may perhaps be still more tardy; I have yet been here but about five weeks, so half my time is not expired. To say the truth, I imagine I cannot be immediately so well as to make a tolerable figure any where but among invalids. I am forced to dine by myself, not being yet able to bear the smell of what common mortals call a dinner; as yet I live with the fairies. I am much

obliged to those who told your Grace I was coming to town, as they said something I should be glad to have true; but here is another Mrs. Montagu who is like me, hath a long nose, pale face, thin cheeks, and also, I believe, diets with fairies, and she is much better than when she came, and many people give me the honour of her recovery.

I am, Madam,

Your Grace's most obliged, most faithful,

E. M.

To Mrs. Anstey.

Sandleford, 1749.

My dear friend's letters are always welcome, pleasing, agreeable, &c. but the last was delightful, as it flattered me with the hope of seeing you at Tunbridge. Why do you doubt? Why hesitate a moment about going thither? The waters are good, the air incomparable, the place

agreeable, and you cannot make a better summer's campaign. Rural and polite life are happily associated there; you may have the most retired, or the most public walks, as you are disposed; the variety of persons and characters make Tunbridge an epitome of the world. I am apt to regret the absence of those things which propriety endears, as one's house, garden, &c. otherwise I think the Tunbridge life far from disagreeable. The reserve and gravity of our nation less prevailing there than in any pl where people are fixed in a domestic establishment, and have a little society of their own towards which they have so strict a fidelity as scarce to bestow a look or smile on a stranger; but in a place of this kind people easily enter into an acquaintance which they can drop at the end of the season, if it does not answer their expectations. You will see beautiful and romantic views; and the place which is now the resort of fine, gay, and polite people, seems designed rather for the retirement of savages, or sages

petrified to savageness. Pray let me know when you set out, that I may use some of those pens which slide so glibly over the paper. I may, perhaps, trouble you to seek me some house upon Mount Ephraim, for, to tell you the truth, I get as far from the busy haunts of the place as I can; for it agrees neither with my inclination nor health to be in the midst of what are called the diversions of the place. An evening assembly in July is rather too warm; and tell it not in the regions of politeness, but I had rather see a few glow-worms on a green, in a warm summer's evening, than belles adorned with brilliants, or beaux bright with clinquant. I cannot be at Tunbridge before the beginning of July; I am engaged to the nightingale and the cuckoo for this month. Sandleford is in its vernal pride; my orange trees are fair as the Hesperian tree, and without a dragon.

I spent about a week in my way hither at Mrs. Botham's. You may believe I was very happy to be with my friend

while she was surrounded with her fine children; there I acquired a fine girl of ten years old, ready baptized, catechised, and prettily instructed in the use of the alphabet either in writing or reading. My little cousin is now at my elbow writing to her eldest brother. Her letters put me in mind of a correspondence that I remember carried on between Cambridge and Brinkly. I am in hopes of seeing my brother Willy here in a few days; I hope his Latin speec[h] was worthy of a fellow of St. John's. [I] shall be mortified if you do not favo[ur] me with a line by the post after you receive this, to tell me you are going to Tunbridge; I will never forgive you if you lose such an opportunity to amuse yourself, oblige Lady Romney, and gratify your faithful

and affectionate friend,

E. Montagu

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Tunbridge Wells, Sept. the 8th, 1749.

DEAR MADAM,

THE various occupations of a place like this make one a bad correspondent, and having been a long time very much out of health, I was irretrievably sunk in a debt of letters, which is now something abated; but I am far from having acquitted myself of the devoirs of a good correspondent. I have been for a fortnight in a most flourishing state of health, which to acquire and maintain has cost me time and pains; drinking waters, riding on horseback, airing in a post-chaise, continual dissipation, and uninterrupted idleness; sacrificing still the end of living to the means. Our company is much diminished; of the many that go there are a few whom one regrets; and first of the rank of these are Mr. and Mrs. Southwell. I promised, or threatened, Mr. Southwell to write his memoirs; in the first place he is l'ami du genre

humain, so popular, so complaisant, that I (who am jealous of his favours) want to infuse a little of the zest of misanthropy into him; then for the ladies from fourscore to fourteen, he is their zealous admirer, and faithful humble servant. I found him guilty on the statute of coquetry with the Countess of Abercorn: old Mrs. Ashley has added a yard of whalebone to her plumpers merely on his account; and really she seems now to have put a perfect farthingale over her upper jaw, to the great discomfort of her gums, who liked better the soft covering of her lips. You will be perhaps ready to enquire whom I pass my time with here; why, to my comfort, there are some still left who are agreeable reasonable people. The Attorney-general* and his wife are my old acquaintance, and amiable agreeable companions; then about twenty yards from our house lodges the wife of Admiral Boscawen, a very sensible, lively, ingenious woman, and who seems to have good moral qualities;

* Sir Dudley Ryder.

we often pass the evening together partly in conversation, partly in reading. Lady Robinson * too is here, but so ill as not to come abroad; but I visit her often on the footing of a country neighbour; she is very agreeable, and has a charming little family, who are governed with great prudence and regularity. Here are besides three or four sensible agreeable men, some of whom usually dine with us, that the hours one is to pass, do not off in the heaviest manner; and the at amendment I have found by the aters lately, keeps up my spirits. We have not fixed any time for going away; the six weeks, which is the usual term for drinking the waters, will be expired next Friday: but the interruptions I have met with from illness in taking them, will induce me to stay as long as the weather is good. You know Mr. Montagu is always desirous I should do what is best for me, and the preference which we give to one place above another,

* Wife of Sir Thomas Robinson, afterwards Lord Grantham, and Secretary of State.

is not equal to the difference of health and sickness. If ever I find a murmur arising in me at my weak constitution, I correct it by thinking how few people would be allowed the indulgencies and remedies that I have. We cannot always find those on whom we depend ready to make our health their first and principal object, which no point of convenience or pleasure shall overbalance.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate and faithful
humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge Wells, the 26th, 1749.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR letter deserves many thanks; it was the most agreeable manner of saying you had forgiven a fault which I could not excuse in myself. It certainly is a duty

in friendship not even to seem to forget or neglect; for though my affection would secure you from the one, and my respect from the other, yet appearances in some cases are almost a crime, and I am sensible I am obliged to you for pardoning my [illegible]leness. Indeed this is a strange place, [illegible]r one has neither business nor leisure [illegible]ere, so many glasses of water are to be [illegible]nk, so many buttered rolls to be eaten, many turns on the walk to be taken, many miles to be gone in a post-chaise [illegible] on horseback, so much pains to be [illegible]ell, so much attention to be civil, that [illegible]reakfasting, visiting, &c. &c. leave one [illegible]o time even to write the important [illegible]ransactions of the day. Since I wrote to [illegible]ou we have had a change of persons, [illegible]ut not of amusements; we have lost [illegible]ost of those who by the courtesy of the world are called good company; but of politeness or sense no visible decrease. In the beginning of the season there are many people of quality whose behaviour is extremely bourgeoise; at the end of it, citizens who by their pride and their

impertinence think they are behaving like persons of quality; and each, by happily deviating from the manners and conduct their condition of life seems to prescribe, meet in the same point of behaviour, and are equally agreeable and well bred. Tunbridge seems the parliament of th world, where every country and ever rank has its representative; we hav Jews of every tribe, and Christian of all nations and conditions. Next some German, whose noble blood mig entitle him to be Grand Master of Malt sits a pin-maker's wife from Smock-alley pick-pockets, who are come to the top their profession, play with noble dukes brag. For my part, I am diverted wit the medley; the different characters an figures are amusing, especially at th balls, where persons of every age, siz and shape, step forth to dance; some who have but just quitted their leading-strings, others whom it would become to shift into the lame and slippered panta-loon; but who will believe it is too soon to attempt, or too late to endeavour, to

charm! But I should be very weary of this place if I had no better entertainment than the absurdities of it. Were I a philosopher, I believe I should be a laughing one; but I might have laughed here till I had cried in good earnest, if I had not found a very agreeable companion amongst them; and it is to some partial representation of your's I owe the pleasure of her acquaintance; you will guess I mean Mrs. Cleland. I am greatly charmed with her; her good sense, her wit, her knowledge of the world, her manner, every thing delights me; she has the vivacity of youth without its petulance, her perfections are so happily tempered they have a moral harmony, if one may use the expression; no note too sharp nor none too flat; her conversation is too gentle to be called wise, and too correct to be called witty; but with that mixture of imagination and judgment which cannot be described or expressed, I am charmed with her to a degree I do not care to own, as I have always declared against sudden friendships. She

seems to have almost as much indulgence to me for my honest simplicity of heart, as I have respect for accomplishments, and is extremely obliging to me on that account. Lady Allen has been often ill, so not much amongst us. The Miss Allens I am not much acquainted with; I have given their aunt so visible a preference that I think they may possibly hate me, which, in a Christian sense, I should be sorry for, but no otherwise, for I detest the ambition of universal empire, even in hearts; I would not be understood as having any dislike to these ladies; I think them sensible, and I believe them good, but I do not think the Graces assisted Lucina at their birth. There are but few whom those delicate ladies breathe upon, and perhaps they thought Mrs. Cleland might officiate in their stead; but I do not discover any traces of her education in them. We have here Lady Parker and her two daughters; they make a very remarkable figure, and will ruin the poor mad-woman of Tunbridge, by outdoing her in dress; such hats, capuchins, and

short-sacks, as were never seen! One of the ladies looks like a state bed running upon castors; she has robbed the valance and tester of a bed for a trimming: they have each of them a lover; indeed as to the dowager, she seems to have no greater joys than EO and a toad-eater can give her. I am sorry for poor Lady Egmont; I hope you was not in any way engaged in the last melancholy scene, for your goodness and humanity makes you undertake those offices of friendship which ill agree with your constitution. It gives me great pleasure to hear you are in so good a state of health. I hope you will not quit your retirement at Richmond as long as you can pursue your scheme of exercise. In London one is so embarassed with human creatures one has no time to think of that excellent animal a horse; though two hours in a day spent on his back gives one more spirits, chearfulness, and fortitude, than twice the time passed with a moral philosopher or stoic. I have always thought tossing in a blanket one of the best instituted

nishments in the world for slight offences, as I am convinced half of our faults arise from want of shaking the machine, so that it is a medicine as well as a chastisement. I had fixed a day for leaving Tunbridge, but Dr. Jurin thinks I should drink some gallons more water, and I really find myself so well here, I shall be afraid to leave off the waters for fear of losing the joy of health. The Bishop, and Mrs. Sherlock, are just gone from hence; he recovered much by the waters, and has now no greater disease than old age; but that you will say is a complication of distempers. I am glad the little Pere is well, though he does not condescend to write to me; he thinks I am in the land of vanities, and so takes no thought about me; but if I am not worthy of his sacred quill, sure a gold pen, bought of Mrs. Chenevix, * and given by a fine lady, might write to a Tunbridge dame. If writing did not disagree with me I would send him a long letter for his punishment; but tell him

* The Pere Courayer lived at Mrs. Chenevix's toy-shop.

my silence has more anger and disdain in it, than the most pompous words could express.

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

1749.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE not so well observed your orders to repair my looks as I could wish. I had a little return of my complaint, which has humbled my countenance; however, I am well again, and my nerves and spirits are improved by constant riding on horseback. You need not warn me against too constant application; my health requires so much care, that I have little attention to any thing else. I agree with you, that learning languages is rather the business of childhood than of persons grown up. A memory fit to receive impressions, and a mind not capable of reasoning, are the properest

capacities for acquirements of this sort; but when we are young we are too idle to seek advantages not offered to us; and though I will own any one language contains more books than I should ever read, yet the best writers are but few. Books but indifferently written, and the best subjects ill treated, afford little delight. Apropos of books; I have read the first volume of Mrs. Pilkington; she has a pretty genius for poetry, a turn of wit and satire, and vanity pour les mettre en œuvre; she never suppresses a good thought, nor forgets a bon mot, though said seven years before; her apologies do not prove her innocent; one sees through her character, but at the same time one imagines nature meant her well in the gifts it gave her, and that a bad education, bad company, and a bad husband, perverted her. It is often said that wit is a dangerous quality; it is there meant that it is an offensive weapon that may attack friend as well as enemy, and is a perilous thing in society; but wit in women is apt to have other bad

consequences; like a sword without a scabbard it wounds the wearer, and provokes assailants. I am sorry to say the generality of women who have excelled in wit have failed in chastity; perhaps it inspires too much confidence in the possessor, and raises an inclination in the men towards them, without inspiring an esteem; so that they are more attacked and less guarded than other women. Mrs. Pilkington is very severe on the clergy; but I hope they look on her spite as an encomium. She is very saucy about some Bishops and some Bishops' ladies; but I dare say they are above being mortified by her. The charge of jealousy is a little provoking; it is as much as to say a lady wants charms and a prelate chastity; whereas, by courtesy, all ladies have the first, and all prelates the latter. You must excuse me if I own I could not help laughing at that passage. I thought I saw the lady armed in the terrors of severe virtue, and the good-humoured Bishop smiling with soft and gentle courtesy; and from the good qualities of

both, the saucy author has drawn matter of criticism. I am impatient for the second volume, which she promises shall be more entertaining than the first. By the by, what a ridiculous light she makes Mr. Worsdale appear in! A beau dressed from Monmouth-street would not make so absurd a figure as a man setting up for a wit with purchased poetry. Wit and sense are a sort of stock that cannot be transferred; we may purchase another man's house, land, apparel, or furniture, and it becomes our own to wear and use; but the riches, and furniture, and dress of the mind, are not to be so appropriated. I have sent you some small feathers, that you may at your convenient leisure finish me a rose and send it down; it will be honour enough to me if I can imitate. It is now grown the fashion to borrow ornaments for cabinets and dressing-rooms of birds and fishes, and vanity and virtuoso ship go hand in hand. You are very good in thinking of my brothers; I grow impatient for their arrival; I propose to come to town to see them, and I imagin

by that time you will have left Kensington. I must leave you to dress for dinner, though I prefer your company to eating and dressing. How few of our employments are regulated by inclination!

I am, dear Madam,

your very sincere and affectionate friend,
and humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

DEAR MADAM,

Two days before I received your kind and agreeable letter, I had prepared my pen, ink, and paper, to write to you; but some domestic affairs prevented me; I did not design to mortify myself so far with a penance enjoined me by a lay doctor, as not to write to my dear Mrs. Donnellan, of whom I think often, and with great desire to know how she does, what she does, and if she remembers me.

I agree with you that Miss Clarissa Harlow is a melancholy companion; her story is very affecting; and though it want two of the greatest merits of a narration elegance and brevity, yet it is interesting and natural; her virtue is exalted to the highest degree human nature is capable of, with all the assistance of piety, goodness of disposition, the best education, and constant practice of what is right; her virtue is as amiable as severe, which shews art in the writer, for it is difficult for the same thing to be the object of love and reverence; and a strict character, like regular features, is apt not to please from its too great exactness. Lovelace is a detestable wretch, constant in nothing but mischief; his good resolutions soon laid aside, and his repentance very short; a shocking levity in the most affecting instances; a character of pride without its usual mixture, generosity; great captiousness without delicacy; a nice sense of blame without an intention of being innocent; the most injurious, and at the same time the most revengeful

of men; in short, I think his character unnatural, and that he might have brought about the mischief without so many inconsistencies as are put into his composition. There is a certain connection of vices and virtues, and there is no creature in whom they are not in some degree blended; some shadow of virtue in the worst, some allay of vice in the best. There is a great uniformity in the character of Clarissa; she is always the same, rising in virtue and dignity to the occasion. Miss Howe's character is very natural, and well kept up; but Hickman and she are not well matched. Mrs. Howe, with her parental authority, is a representative of many good mothers; always in the right because she is old; always to be obeyed because she is a parent; very good motherly logic. Madam Howe was a petulant wife as well as an imperious mother; why did not Miss let her and Mr. Anthony Harlow join their obstinacy, covetousness, and infirmities together? I approved the party. Our screen goes on well. I wish you would be so good as to

99657

get Lucas to send half an ounce of French partridge feathers, and half an ounce of the best dyed yellow feathers to you; and that you would be so good as send them in covers. Pray has not the macaw dropt some small blue or yellow feathers? I desire my best respects to Mrs. Percival. I grieve for the poor tippet, for which I have a grateful remembrance; it was a comfortable friend in cold weather. Mr. Montagu is much your's.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate and faithful friend,

E. M.

To the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen.

Hill-street, Tuesday night.

DEAR MADAM,

You see with what zeal I endeavour to maintain that place in your thoughts which the good fortune of being your near neighbour on the hill first gave me;

hough I parted with you only on Sunday ight, and hope to meet you again on hursday morning, I dare not trust even hat short interval without entering some claim to your remembrance. If I did not know your present situation to be ery vacant of pleasure, company, and usiness, I should be afraid to indulge myself in this intrusion, and might rather rely on your goodness to cast a moment's thought upon me at a time of leisure, than boldly demand it by letter; and when you are at home with Mr. Bos-awen, and all your friends about you, I shall only desire you sometimes to review that part of your memory where you have laid me up; I fancy you will find me under the article bagatelle, several de-grees below what you esteem, some distant from what you love, and perhaps not just au niveau of what you like; but still your favours to me, and my regard for you, make me promise myself I shall have some station there; and there are places of so much dignity in themselves that the lowest stations in them are honourable,

and among such do I reckon the sacred treasury of your remembrance. It is usual with travellers to give an account of their voyages, but though I travelled by land and water, my journey lying through the turnpike-road, and well-navigated Thames, it will be dangerous to give my imagination its full scope in so well-known a track; but do me the honour to believe, that had I gone the same number of miles in Arabia, or had ferried over the Nile, I would have made elephants kneel to do you obeisance, and crocodiles weep elegies on my departure from you. But, without fishing in the Nile for wonders, I saw at Wickham the miracle of the moral world, a Christian poet,* an humble philosopher, a great genius without contempt of those who have none; so do not look upon my journey as without a glorious event, or sight uncommon, for I believe, one might travel round the world, and, take him for all in all, one should never look upon his like again. I

* Mr. Gilbert West, translator of Pindar, and author of the Observations on the Resurrection.

charmed with Mrs. West, and approve you said of her. She is neither a nth Muse, nor a fourth Grace, but she better than all put together. I believe may be truly said of her,

That she always speaks her thought,
And always thinks the very thing she ought.

Her vivacity, easiness of behaviour, and good sense, delight me. She is quite original, and I think one cannot rank her under any particular species of character without robbing her of something that is truly her own. If one said good, agreeable, amiable, it is still leaving out a great deal; and I do not know what name to give her character, but *pour chiffres*, she should have honesty *pour sa devise*, *la bonté pour ame*, and good sense and chearfulness for supporters. Mr. West has been so good as to find out a cottage for me, and we propose to go to Wickham on Thursday; I chose that day that I might have the additional pleasure of seeing you, so pray come as early as you can. The pleasure of being

near Mr. West gets the better of considerations in regard to the situati of my cottage; and though it is rath too far from London, I think I shall g thither with greater alacrity than to a place nearer town, where one cannot ha such a neighbour, and I hope it will an inducement to you to visit my he mitage, where you shall be entertained with the wholesome fare of brown bread, sincerity, and red cow's milk, which afford good nourishment to the mind and body; and far away be the poison of ragoûts and flattery, and the modern arts of cookery and compliment;

> But such savoury messes,
> As neat-handed Phillis dresses,

served in a wooden dish, you shall be welcome to; and if we can get Mr. West and his wife of the party, we shall have a feast of reason that would please a true ancient epicurean, and stoic too. I am sorry I cannot amuse you with any news or chat of the town, but I have not seen any person who could give me infor-

ation of that sort. I hear there is great rife and contention between Mr. Barry d Garrick, each acting the part of omeo every night, and that the ladies hink the first makes the better lover, by hich one may learn they think beauty a etter qualification than sense in that haracter; for Barry always seems to betray the fool in all the parts he appears in. Lady Townshend says he has sentimental blue eyes; it seems to me the sentiment Lady Townshend admires in Mr. Barry's eyes might bear an interpretation not more elegant than my cousin's translation of *en famille* by the word higgledy-piggledy. I wish you would come on to London on Friday, instead of going to Hatchlands. I believe we shall stay here some time, for Mr. Montagu seems in no manner of haste to go into the country; for my part I repine at losing so many days that one might enjoy in the pleasures of the rural scene; and at this time of the year one is more choice and covetous of good weather. Sunshine at this time, like chearfulness in old age, pleases the

more as it is not the usual temper of t
season. I was very glad to hear by n
brother that you were better; but pra
have great attention to your health, fo
believe me, even with the best spirit
one can but just keep up to the mark
content without it; so if advice of phy
sicians is necessary let not any considera
tion tempt you to neglect it. As to my
cousin, whose ruling maxim is, the more
the merrier, she will easily be prevailed
on to come to London; and if she gathers
mirth by poll tax, this is undoubtedly the
place for her. I could wish to get into
the country while I am well enough to
read and amuse myself; if I carried any
sense to Tunbridge, (which indeed I am
not sure of) I have dissipated it entirely,
for my head feels weaker than ever; if I
had laid out any talents in the wit of the
times I might account for being so ex-
hausted. Some people reduce their wit
to an impalpable powder, and mix it up
in a rebus; others wrap up their's in a
riddle, but mine and Mr. Plunket's, cer-
tainly went off by insensible perspiration

small-talk. I am extremely ashamed the length of my letter, as it is the st time of my appearing to you in this ape; but pray remember I did not gin with an encomium upon brevity, ke good Mr. Dowden, when he designed a longer sermon than usual; and I ally look upon a long letter as the only piate that does not hurt the nerves; nd happy shall I be if I can be ranked among those benevolent writers who, Mr. Pope says, are sleepless themselves, to give their readers sleep. If you ever talk in your sleep I should be glad if you would make my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Smith, if they should be with you when you receive this. As to my cousin, with all the affection of a cousin, and all the tenderness of an aunt, I greet her; for her sake may every name she bears be made into a rebus, and every object she sees into a riddle. But for her lovers, let them not speak in parable, but in plain and honest English, else her shield and buckler of decorum, the honi soit qui mal y pense, by which she signifies

she is not to avoid or understand an expression that is not very plain and unequivocal, may occasion infinite loss of time and a tedious delay of matrimony.

I am, dear Mrs. Boscawen's
most obedient, obliged, and faithful
humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

October the 16th, 1749.

MY dear Mrs. Boscawen knows enough of the hurry and bustle of London not to expect the performance of the devoirs of friendship from any of its wicked inhabitants. Had I inhabited the regions of peace, leisure, and reason, I should have told you long ago that I was much concerned at the complaint of your eyes; but I have been in so many shops to buy what I did not want, and in so many

ses to visit people I did not care for, in so many places to learn news I not interested in; that, for myself my friends, no hours remained. This t of life is by no means to be reckoned ongst les égaremens du coeur et de sprit; for the heart acts no part in e scene, but is merely attending to he animal œconomy. What is the an-dote or cure of the fatal poison of this ity tarantula, so much worse than that of the fields, as the dancing is constant, and the giddiness perpetual, and not to be cured by a reasonable degree of exercise; for we continue this figure-dance in regular confusion till Holbein's universal partner takes us by the hand? Reason, say you, would be the cure; but, my dear, do you think reason knocks at people's doors like the Evening Post? Or comes every morning like the Daily Advertiser? If he comes as a Daily Advertiser it is to people in the country; in town he does not come out above once a year, like the almanac. Reason is an old gentleman, who from the infancy of

the world, to this its riper age, has e
found people hard of hearing, and by
necessity of frequent repetitions of
advice is now grown so hoarse he utt
but in whispers, and that only wh
people commune with their own hear
in their chambers, and are still. Aft
my deserved panegyric on the city
London, it will not sound generous t
say I wish you here; but the habit o
speaking truth (which I brought fron
the country) will prevail, and I will confess that before I go out of town I could be glad to enjoy some of your conversation; our departure is deferred till next week. I cannot deny that after the gaieties of Tunbridge, and dissipation of London, I shall be glad to enter into still life. The country does not indeed wear the rich livery of summer, but books will supply the *vaide* of every season and situation. If one sighs for pastoral scenes, and rural beauty, the fields bloom in description, and look green in song. If human passions are the enquiry, what volumes on the subject! If the actions of

n excite our attention and curiosity it
out turning to history; and statesmen,
oes, lawgivers, sit down by your fire-
e, and tell you the sum of their merit,
eir glory, their faults, and disgraces,
ich would you see still magnified
yond the life,

Read, what in every age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.

Or, if the smaller errors, and lesser ridi-
cules of common life amuse you, you
ay take up the Comic Muse. Thus I
pose you spend your time at Hatch-
ds, while I know nothing of antiquity
the cry of old clothes, nor any thing
l of the present times but hot cod-
s. The cruel owner of the house near
West makes unreasonable demands;
are going to treat for one about two
les from him, which Mrs. West and he
nt with us to see yesterday; it is in
every thing that I could wish, but that
it is too far from Wickham, which I am
the more concerned at, as Mrs. West does
not love to go so far from home. What

a delightful neighbourhood shall we
in! Do not you envy me? In spite
envy though, I must tell you Mr. W
says he loves and honours you; knowi
him, and knowing you, I did not dou
it, but methinks it was relying much
my generosity and friendship to think
should be pleased to hear it; by whic
Madam, I would modestly hint, and d
cently insinuate, that he loves an
honours me too, for he must honour
generous principle in any one, and love
an affectionate one; so I think I ha
made out my proposition in a very log
manner, and given it almost the force
a syllogism, and a syllogism is lik
twisted cobweb, though the single th
will not bear handling, yet twisted,
entwisted, by the instruments of rheto
it is hard to be broken. But I am in
fourth page of my letter, and not
word of news yet. Shall I begin with
gentleman who is going to take a wife o
his own, or one who has taken the wife
of another? There is more zest in the
latter story, but more dignity in the

ner. The Duke of Ancaster is going take unto wife the daughter of Mr. nton; the match is at last agreed upon, l coaches, and jewels, and horses, vants, and houses, and clothes, and all fine things with which Hymen now broiders his saffron robe, are bespoken. ethinks I repent promising the other ory, but having awakened your curio- ity, there will be more charity in venting he scandal than in suppressing it, or, at st, so I would reconcile it to my mo- ty. Know then (what never should known), a certain lady called Mrs. e eloped from her husband with a Hamilton; the affair happened thus: Pope was overturned near Mr. nton's house, and had his leg broken, which Mr. Hamilton took him home, sent for a surgeon, and Mrs. Pope ttend him. Mrs. Pope was so pleased with his hospitality, she returned all the civility in her power, and being tired of her husband, thought she could never take a better opportunity to run away, than when he was so little able to run

after her, so away she went with
Hamilton, leaving her consort in pos
sion of her gallant's house. Where t
are gone is not known, and wer
Mr. Pope, I should never enquire.
am sorry for the woman, as her bea
has been her ruin. She is extrem
handsome and foolish; her vanity ruin
her circumstances; and pride, pover
and beauty, are ill advisers, ill suited
conduct safely through a world like thi
where the temptations without are su
cient dangers, without the sedu
within the mind. I shall be glad of a
from my cousin whenever she is at
sure, for I am uneasy to hear how y
on. Mr. Ramsey was so good as
on us, and Mr. Montagu and I w
his house, where we had the pleasu
see some admirable pictures; and
we all went to the abbey, and wa
among silent wits, pacific warriors, and
historians who did not tell us any lies,
even for their party. The town begins
to fill; Mr. Carr exhibits silks of a new
taste, stuffs of a new pattern, damasks of

ew fabric, and writes letters full of cery eloquence and rhetoric to all his tomers, to put them in mind of gowns l birth-days. I had the pleasure of oying Lady Sandwich's company half ast week, but she returned into Hunt-donshire on Monday. If I could tell any more news I would, as it is my e to tell all I know; for want of vention I cannot go farther; but I ant not the assistance of imagination, nvention, or any thing but my most certain knowledge, to affirm and declare myself dear Mrs. Boscawen's

most affectionate, and faithful
humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To Edward Montagu, Esq. her husband.

1749.

MY DEAREST,

I HAD this morning the pleasure of your letter, which was in every respect agreeable, and in none more so than your having

fixed your time for going to Sandlefo
as I shall the sooner hope to see my b
and dearest friend here. I can as
give little account of the place;
staid at Lady Talbot's house till l
night; this morning we drank the wate
and then went airing in Lady Sandwic
post chaise. The country here is w
and romantic, and we have a charmi
view from our windows; our lodging
are the best in the place, and we have
very large garden belonging to them,
that we taste the rural pleasures in great
perfection. As to the joys of society,
and diversions of the public rooms, we
can yet say nothing, for we have not yet
been at the rooms, but propose to go this
evening. I shall wish I could procure
wings to bring me to you on the terrace
at Sandleford, where I have passed so
many happy hours in the conversation of
the best of companions and kindest of
friends, and I hope you will there recol-
lect one who followed your steps as con-
stantly as your shadow; I am still follow-
ing them, for there are few moments in

ich my thoughts are not employed on
u, and ever in the tenderest and most
thful manner. I am glad you were not
spleased at my sending for the chariot;
ou may indeed truly say you are always
illing I should enjoy what you possess;
temper that has made me happier in the
are of a moderate fortune than another
urn would have done with an immense
one; it has endeared every pleasure, and
heightened all my obligations, and will
ever secure you the utmost gratitude and
most sincere acknowledgments. I am
glad the Captain goes with you, and hope
you will have fine weather, and all that
can make your journey pleasant. The
charms of Sandleford are strongly in my
remembrance, and I hope will delight
you, but still I would have you find they
want your little friend. Jack writes me
word he is well. Adieu for the present;
I have as yet had little leisure, being only
since twelve last night in our own house;
but I hope by another post to write a
longer letter; this would be long indeed,

were I to say how much, and how ofte
wish to see you, and how sincerely I
your's,

E. MONTA

To the Same.

Tunbridge Wells, 174

MY DEAREST,

MAY this find you in perfect health
enjoying the quiet, but delicate pleasures
of the country! I am now sitting opposite
to a view not unlike that from your
terrace at Sandleford. Tunbridge, though
it contains persons of high rank and dis-
tinction, does not, from its buildings,
make a more superb figure than New-
town; small houses irregularly placed,
with trees intermixed, appear rural and
romantic, and though the inhabitants of
these little edifices may not condescend
to own that, as the song says,

To folks in a cottage contentment is wealth;

r few of them are possessed of any
g better. Half of us come here to
the bodily evils occasioned by lazi-
; the other half to remedy the
tal disease of idleness and inoccupa-
, called l'ennui; heavy fines raised
wealth and rank, which impartial
re levies on her elder sons, while her
rious younger children neither groan
h bodily pain, nor sigh with ima-
nary dissatisfaction. I imagine the in-
dustrious bee has a better relish to the
honey it makes than the drone to that it
seizes; though we, who are the drones of
he world, are apt to think otherwise,
nd to pity the labour of their pursuits,
and the domestic cares of the cell; but
what have bees and moral reflections to
do in a letter? So, first, I must ask pardon
ave made my correspondent yawn,
mmon effect of serious and sad re-
ions out of place,) and then proceed
hat concerns me more. When may I
e to see my best and dearest friend
ere? Mrs. Isted tells me she heard you
got safe to Reading. I flatter myself the

Captain will think Berkshire not in
to Surry, especially if he bestride
Arabian steed, and surveys the pros
from Newbury Wash, Greenham,
When he is tired of mere cows and sl
and would behold some of those
creatures, Father Philip's geese, here
some as fair as swans and as gentl
can be desired, and I hope he will ta
trip to Tunbridge. Though the la
here have not the pretty little feet of t
Chinese, and have the power of runnin
fast, they make no ill use of the privilege,
and will not cruelly fly from their ad
mirers. I was much shocked at th
melancholy death of poor Mr. Ereskine
I am afraid it will give great concern to
my brothers Matt and Morris; Lord Powis
mentioned it yesterday morning, whic
was the first I had heard of it. Sir
Millbank is here with a great retin
have not yet seen them, for we nev
to the walks but in the morning to d
the waters. I should have wrote y
long letter to-day, but Lady Talbot ca
in and prevented me. Lady Sandwich

s still to think of going to Hun-
lon races, which is a great concern
e, for she is the most agreeable per-
to live with imaginable; and we have
led ourselves together in a manner
e easy and convenient to us both.
Joys is going to London to-day, and
ope will bring down Master Montagu
h him. We are going to see an old
tle to-day which belonged to an an-
stor of yours, according to the Duke of
Montagu's pedigree, which grows as near
Adam as a genealogist can carry it, and
hey have marvellous methods of pierc-
ing the darkness of antiquity, of which I
have an excellent evidence before my
eyes in the pedigree of Lord ———,
h hangs over the chimney. I desire
ove to Mrs. Isted, whom I will epis-
by the next post. My best love
ds the Captain. Every tender wish,
grateful thought, waits on you, and
you ever as kindly accept the only
in my power, the faithful love and
ncere affection, of your most grateful,
and obedient wife,

E. Montagu.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Tunbridge Wells,

SIR,

To excuse my silence I must give an account of where I have been, how employed; and when you find t I have been drinking Tunbridge wat you will less wonder I have not wro an employment judged improper her as it is apt to make the waters get into the head, where they have an effect very unlike Helicon; and, instead of a docte et sainte ivresse, give one a giddiness and an intoxication that is accompanied with a strange kind of stupidity. I came here earlier in the season than I had posed, on purpose to enjoy the com of Lady Sandwich, who could not stay after the races at Huntingdon began. were here three weeks in great happ and tranquillity; the place was thi company, but I wanted none while I her's; we drank the waters, and walked in the morning; in the evening we went

ut together in a post-chaise.* Her conersation has every ornament and charm, er temper is even and amiable, her ehaviour owes its constant politeness to delicacy of morals; think how happy friend must make me! Two days ore that fixed for her departure, she as alarmed by a gentleman's telling her ord Sandwich was very ill of a fever, ut that expecting her so soon in town he would not frighten her by a message; this gave her the utmost uneasiness, and she came home and ordered her post chaise to be ready immediately. I did not leave her in such distress, but got into it with her, and we reached London in little more than four hours. We had the satisfaction of finding Lord Sandwich ver well, that he had indeed been for a ours extremely ill, but the bark had ely cured him. I was very angry the teller of this woeful tale for iving me of my friend's company , and giving her so much uneasiness; I had left Mr. Montagu at Tunbridge,

*ost-chaises were then newly invented by Jethro Tull.

who had arrived here but the day befor
I staid only one night in London, a
the next day returned in my own po
chaise, with the same expedition, as I ha
gone. I brought Mrs. Medows dow
with me, who staid here a wee
she had never seen the place I preva
on her to take that opportunity of ma
ing it a visit. To my great mortificati
Mr. Montagu was sent for to London o
being left an executor to the Duke o
Montagu's will; the Dukes of Bedfor
and Devonshire are so also: and they
have not yet come to any determinatio
what is to be done, and Mr. Montagu is
waiting in town for the conclusion of this
business. I think, having said much of
myself, I should now give you some ac
count of the company here: we
the Dutchess of Bedford, Lord and
Fitzwalter, and Lady Ancram,
Anson, Lord and Lady Elibank, do
Lady Barrington, Lady Betty Ger
Lord and Lady Vere Beauclerk,
Talbot, Lord March, and Lord Eglint
Lord Granby and Lord Powis are

y, as is the Dutchess of Somerset
daughters; Lady Winchelsea,
rd Finch and Mrs. Finch, Mr.
Mrs. Hope, Lady Lucy and
ard are here; Mr. and Mrs.
ed last night; besides these we
l people of fashion, and of
d mighty tribe. Within
a great number of
t they rather
than to the
company. I was sorry the
merset left us; her beha-
obliging and so proper, I
good example for persons
k; it is surprizing that the
state, and princely pride, she
n so long used to, should have
such an easiness of manners; she
ed t and do what was civil
out the intention of being gracious.
y Frances Seymour* is very handsome,
y Charlotte† is not so, but more
eable than her sister by an unaffected

*Afterwards married to Lord Granby.
†Afterwards married to Lord Aylesford.

good humour. In many resp
place is inferior to the Bath, in
better. We are not confine
streets; the houses are scatte
larly, and Tunbridge Wells lo
the window I now sit by, a litt
village you see from our terr
dleford, only that the inhal
of Jack and Joan, a
The edifices t
greater, no
sure or content amon
who have bad nerves, t
healthful and laborious
slow and consuming diseas
is not known among the in
though, as fortune's elder c
are best portioned, I know not
we are most beloved; I hope not;
vidence made the syst for t
titude I believe the life t
rality of the world must lea
happy. But, say you, the liberal e
the acquaintance with the Muse
familiarity with the Graces; can
have had it? No, my friend, but ren

t Mr. Pope says of that portion of
lge we call wisdom,

t to know, how little can be known,
all others' wants, and feel our own.

s are too critical, and the Graces
te, for common life; poor ladies!
would be tired of the public
t Tunbridge. Those who would
t in this world should rather wish
good appetite than an exquisite
, ordinary conversation is an insipid
business a gross food, so the genera-
f beaux-esprits are in the vapours;
for those who are always seeking
sements they find it a painful search;
this we have had a late instance in
ard to our masquerades; people in
had met one another so often at
blies, &c. they hated each others
s, and we had masquerades of great
ense and shew; these tired too, and
wanted to be transported to another
ntry. A Venetian masquerade was
ught of; it was called a jubilee; and
at was surnamed a gondola, and all

people were transported; a jul
Ranelagh, and a gondola on the
Oh rare! The conductor of th
amusement repeats the diver
people were tired. Thus has it
in furniture; sick of Grecian
and symmetry, or Gothic gran
magnificence, we must all seek
barous gaudy goût of the Chine
fat-headed Pagods, and shaki ng
darins, bear the prize from the
works of antiquity; and Apollo
Venus must give way to a fat idol w
sconce on his head. You will won
should condemn the taste I have au
plied with, but in trifles I shall so
conform to the fashion. I may go to
jubilee masquerade; or furnish my r
with a Turkey carpet, without tur
Papist or Mahometan. But to return
whence my digression has brought me
own in this place I observe people's ch
malady is of the spirits; ask them w
they ail, and they say nothing enliven
pleases them.—For my part, when I h
health, I think myself happy, but

not from the amusements I meet with, but from the sunshine of the heart, from something I cannot account for; but it is better than what reason and reflection does for others. May you ever be chearful and happy from some reason; either from natural spirits or reflection. You are engaged in laudable pursuits, and happy in a worthy and amiable family, from thence you will find a constant ty and content. While you preach ties of content and thankfulness r parish, you teach yourself the ; an attention to them keeps you yed, and the great enemy of human is idleness, and the bane of reason pation; all which a pleasurable life have engaged you in. After all, fine morality I must dress for the I live in too much hurry, though I got a house almost a mile from the , and have a comfortable dwelling, pretty garden. My only neighbour dy Talbot, and she is a very agree- one; as I have a coach with me I nk myself best situated here, as I have

some hours every day of retirement, and endeavour to think myself in the country.

I am, Sir,
your most obliged humble servant,
and sincere friend,
E. MONTAGU.

To Miss Anstey.

Sandleford, 21st Decemb

MY DEAR MISS ANSTEY,

YOUR letter came to my hands
the few days I staid in town to tak
of my brother, who is gone to Chi
I was then embarrassed with busines
divers engagements, I proposed w
to you as soon as I got to my pe
habitation at Sandleford; but on th
I acquired so bad a cold I could h
see to read or write, and am but j
a capacity to do either at present.
Medows came to us the day after

came here, and spent a week with us; she went yesterday to Sir Philip Medows's, at Chute Park. A little before I went to London I lost my very good neighbour the Dutchess of Chandos; a stroke of the palsy carried her off in a few days; her bodily pains were great, but her mind felt the serenity that gilds the evening of a virtuous life; she quitted the world with that decent farewell which people take of it, who rather consider it as a place in which they are to impart good than to enjoy it; her character has made a great impression on me, as I think her a rare instance that age could not make conceited and stiff, nor retirement discontented, nor virtue inflexible and severe: these faults we pardon, and as so often following such circumstances, we look on them as cause and effect joined in almost insepara e union; but there are happy natures which acknowledge no such tie and dependance, and these only have a right to the respect from age and virtue; others should be contented if we balance as

equally our praise and censure as they do their virtue and vice; and to a negative character do negative honour. I found the town empty, and, in regard to public diversions, dull. I suppose the new pamphlets come down to Cambridge; there is one styled an Occasional Letter, which has the marks of a great hand; it is political, addressed to Mr. Pelham on the late disputes of the ministry; it is so much in the style of Lord Bolingbroke one can hardly doubt its being his, though he does not own it. There is a pamphlet which amuses me, (by a lady,) addressed to Mrs. Con. Philips, and designed as an answer to her letter to Lord Chesterfield; it is written with some spirit and argument, but it has the female frailty of displaying more learning than is necessary or graceful; and the fair one has read Clarissa till she has acquired something of the Precieuse, and has spoiled her style by an imitation of Mr. Richardson. When your booksellers get the King of Prussia's Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Bran-

denbourg, I recommend them to your reading; besides the remarkable circumstance of being written by a King, they are really very entertaining; he is an author of spirit, less timid, and more decisive than the humble pedant in his studious cell; he writes en roi; his happy confidence diverts me, and I love to see the royal prerogative extending to politics, physics, and morality; and, to say the truth, the polishing of some of our European neighbours, within the last century, from barbarity to humanity, is amusing, and gives one a true idea of what our allies the Germans were and are. I mentioned to you the letter written with reference to Sully's Memoires; the Memoires themselves are universally read and commended, and contain the history of the greatest king by the wisest minister. This gloomy season of the year, when nature's beauties fade, turns our thoughts to the animal of all seasons, man; what he is doing, or has done, must engross our present attention; the vegetable and

brute creation having withdrawn themselves from our observation, and, I imagine, you have not commerce enough with the living to engross all your time or amuse every hour, so I am leading you to the laurelled tombs of deceased heroes. I was much entertained with your account of the civil wars of Cambridge. I imagine the dispute will be the more lasting in proportion to the frivolousness of the difference; for, to the honour of my own species do I speak it, they contend for nothing so violently as forms, nor dispute for any thing so obstinately as words. I am afraid the Muses will abdicate their seat; if they find the discord so loud their sweet and harmonious voices cannot be heard; for all ladies, even Parnassian dames, desire attention. I shall be infinitely obliged to my dear Miss Anstey if she will endeavour to get a quarter of a pound of saffron for Lady Sandwich, and send it to her by the first opportunity, and please to let me know what it costs. I ask pardon for giving you this trouble, but she is very fond of

it, and cannot get any that is good. Mr. Montagu desires his compliments. I beg mine to the dear Mrs. Anstey and your brother. I shall stay here till the meeting of the Parliament. A letter from my friend will enliven my retirement.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate friend, and
faithful and obliged humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

P. S. How goes on your feather screen? If you want grebe's, or any sort of dyed feathers, let me know when I am in town.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Sandleford, the 30th December, 1750.

I SHOULD have wrote to my dear Mrs. Donnellan sooner, but that I have had a great cold, which took such entire possession of my head and eyes that it disabled

me in great measure for writing. Mr. Montagu had a cough, which began to alarm me; but, thank God, it is entirely gone off. Mrs. Medows came here the day after I arrived, and spent some days with us; so that while we had company I had not all the leisure I have at present. My situation now affords me leisure, which you busy mortals in London have no notion of. The great devoir of receiving and returning visits, the necessary resort to assemblies, the indispensible duties of seeing and being seen, reach not at such a distance from the glorious metropolis. I have hardly seen a tree or a distant hill; the fogs having hindered even my eyes from wandering abroad. I have neither been so drowsy as people who are quite idle, nor so alert as those who are absolutely busy. The polite world has no way of driving away l'ennui but by pleasure, we country gentlefolks know it may be banished by occupation. With great submission to the excellent author of les Caracteres et Mœurs du Siecle, one should reverse his

maxim, and rather pass one's life à faire des riens, qu'à rien faire. Do but do something, the application to it will make it appear important, and the being the doer of it laudable; so that one is sure to be pleased oneself; to please others is a task so difficult one may never attain it, and perhaps not so necessary that one is obliged to attempt it. We have a loss in not having Dr. Pocock here this Christmas, as we expected. The conversation of a man of letters, and a traveller, is very agreeable in the country. Now I am out of the sphere of attraction of the great city of London, I am as well pleased to hear of some custom at Constantinople as of a new fashion at London; and the Nile is as much in my thoughts as the Thames. In retirement one lives equally to all time, and is a citizen of the world; in society the news, the business, the company of the day, by their nearness take off the attention from great, but distant events and objects. How wisely is this ordered by Providence; for if nearness did not magnify small matters,

and distance lessen great ones, a man might be thinking of the labours of Hercules when he should be shaving his beard or cutting his nails; or be cutting through the Alps with Hannibal when he should help himself to a slice of pudding. Is not the association of Quin and Mrs. Cibber of more importance to us than the union of the empires of the Medes and Persians? and the rules of brag than all the institutions of Lycurgus? But a hundred miles may be as powerful an interposition as a thousand years, and then each object is considered in its natural bulk and figure; then ancient Rome and mighty Babylon somewhat eclipse the present state of things, and heroes dead take more of our attention than living generals, and departed lawgivers than existing ministers. How necessary sometimes to withdraw ourselves to the distance from whence we can truly judge of the worth and importance of things! Every prudent purchaser considers the lots in an auction before the day of sale, lest the impetuosity of the bidders should

excite him to bid more for any commodity than it is worth. Riches and power may be set up at too high a price, and when we see so many bidding all their moral virtues for them, we are apt to be drawn away by example, unless armed by some previous valuation of them in our own minds. But I did not design to carry my reflections so far; you must make some allowance for my situation; it offers me nothing lively or new, it is the very blank of the year; not so much as a new-born butterfly or fresh blown rose to be met with. My rich neighbours are dull, and my poor ones are miserable. Your friend, dame Wood, is now in a miserable condition; not nursed, as Shakespear calls it, by base accommodations, she has no borrowed helps from the sheep, or the silk worm, subsists upon ætherial food, and sleeps under the canopy of heaven; indeed I never heard of such absolute wretchedness; she did not come here because she was entirely covered with the itch, so that till the other day, that beef was

given to the poor, I did not know what was become of her. She did not enter the doors, but stood coughing without, the most terrible spectacle that can be imagined; I would have sent her to Winchester hospital, but they do not receive patients that have any contagious distempers; however, Mr. Withers has begun her cure, and that of the whole family, who are in this condition. I sent to her yesterday, and she is better, and I hope will be cured of all evils but poverty, and that, I think, is too well fixed in that numerous family ever to hope it may be driven away. I shall however endeavour to prevent her from perishing, and not let this disease of poverty become mortal. I am very angry with her that she has lately introduced another heir to wretchedness and want; she has not half Hamlet's delicacies on the question, To be, or not to be? The spurns of office, and the law's delay, are very puny evils to those her offspring must endure; the world affords no law to make her rich, and yet she will encrease and multiply

over the face of the earth. The Dutchess of Chandos is greatly missed by the poor in this rigorous season. There is a family at Donnington castle who are very generous and charitable, but nothing can entirely avail in a part of the world where the manufacture decays; daily labour must give the daily bread; occasional alms, like medicine to the diseased, may alleviate sickness, but can hardly procure constant health. To make the poor happy one must make them industrious. I desire my compliments to Miss Sutton; in the country we always make them in the form of the season; if you both please to take them from me in that manner, and add whatever you wish for the next year, and a happy succession of new years days, you will only do justice to the heart of your

affectionate friend, and faithful
humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 8th of January, 1751.

DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH the time draws near for our meeting, I will give you more last words from Sandleford. To shew our admirable constancy with regard to the country, we shall stay the utmost time we first proposed, in spite of wind, rain, and all the horrid features of winter. When the sun darts a favorable ray I mount my palfrey and pursue health to its proper situation, the mountains. I climbed Sidmonton hills yesterday, and paid a visit to the family of the Watermans, whom I found in all the tranquillity of retired leisure, neither busied in the present affairs of the world, nor studying the transactions of ancient times, as historians and poets offer them to our view; for, from the age of the termagant Semiramis, to the reign of our gracious Queen Anne, there have been no events that can rouse the

dead sese of solitary dullness; when once we have determined to live by ourselves and for ourselves, we have done with rational, and even animal life, and begin to vegetate apace. Since the operations of the virtuosi upon the middle species between the animal and vegetable things, I look upon these people as not in a state of security; and, to avoid the scissars of Mr. Trembley, I advise these human polypus's to look well to their animal rights and privileges, at least. But to my dear neighbours; —the good man was yawning by the fire-side, the good woman feeding her birds, and pretty miss making essence of lemon. Little awed by the importance of these occupations, I recommended a change of scene, and advised a journey to town; but how near a friend is pride to dullness! pride stepped in, animated his features with a frown, and he rejected the proposal with much disdain of the follies and vanities of a town life. How is it that dullness, laziness, and inactivity, assume honourable names, and thrust

themselves into the company of wisdom; while lively pleasures are ever ranked in the train of folly; as if the moment we ceased to be gay we began to be wise. Oh there is many a studious meditative interval between these degrees of discretion! I did not stay dinner at Sidmonton, but after a short visit left them to pursue their nap, and perfect the cosmetic. As I am not quite dull enough to be proud, nor lively enough to be vain, I will own to you that some of the hours I have passed in my dressing room here might have been as profitably spent in Bartholomew fair. Solomon says wisdom crieth in the streets; and indeed those who give no heed to her there, will hardly listen to her in all the silence of solitude. For it is rather the internal tumult of passions, than the external interruption of hurry and noise, that make us insensible to her calls and admonitions. I believe we shall set out from hence on Tuesday sen'night. I am glad to hear our roads in Hill-street are so good.* I hope I have so far improved

* Hill-street was not then paved.

my stock of health that it will serve my ordinary demands in town, and enable me to enjoy the conversation of my friends. The feather work will not be quite finished, so I shall leave a house full of artificers till it be done.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate and faithful,
E. MONTAGU.

☞ These letters are intended to convey in them the biography of the writer, which the Editor thinks he could not so well exemplify by any remarks of his own, as by the letters themselves. He regrets, in this point of view, that he has neglected hitherto to insert any of Mrs. Montagu's letters to her husband. When the first two volumes were published, her letters to Mr. Montagu, which are very numerous, were still unsorted. The circumstance of their being without dates (excepting by the post-mark of the day of the month, without the date of the year), deterred the Editor from the labour of the arrangement. He has since placed them in order, principally by means of reference to the letters written to her by Mr. Montagu. From this period he will insert a selection of them, because they contain many anecdotes, public and private, and exhibit the course and tenor of the life and disposition of the writer.

To Edward Montagu, Esq. her husband.

Hill-street, the 4th of January, 1751.

MY DEAREST,

I HOPE the leisure of your retirement gives you time to think of me, and to wish our meeting; the bustle of London does not exclude you from my thoughts, nor prevent my wishing continually for your company. Lady Sandwich's spirits were a good deal revived by my coming to her, and she is very thankful to you for giving me leave to do it. You may suppose, as she was my sole temptation to come, she is my sole engagement here. I have not seen the face of any person else except my sister, who was with me yesterday morning. Lord Sandwich is in town. It is said the King's concern for the Queen of Denmark has hurt his health, and that he looks miserably. There is a report that the Princess of Hesse is in a consumption. The King, to oblige the weavers, has declared the mourning shall

last only three months. I cannot hear any public news, except that the Parliament will meet on the seventh of this month, that his Majesty may early repair to that land flowing with milk and honey, called Hanover. Lord and Lady Cardigan are still abroad. My father has reassumed his creative pencil, and I hope will finish the pretty landscape he began for us. Let me hear from you as often as you can spare time, and see you as soon as you can persuade yourself to quit that retirement and leisure you love, and are better able to fill with wise and noble pursuits than most people; but remember here is one who wishes to see you, and is with the most faithful and tender affection,

Your's,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill-street, January 7, 1751.

MY DEAREST,

I AM glad you are so far tired of your monastic life, as to think of returning to the secular state of a husband and member of parliament. I believe our predecessors in the cowl had their particular kinds of volupté, which silence, secresy, and peace might much enhance and recommend; but to those who have been used to the bustle and business of life, such pleasures want vivacity. Boileau makes a man who goes to visit the chantre just before dinner, observe the luxury of a prebendal table; says he,

Il voit la nappe mise,
Admire le bel ordre, et reconnoit l'église.

I have sat so constantly in Lady Sandwich's chimney corner, I can give you little account of the world. It is said Lord Harcourt, Lord Lincoln, and Prince

Edward, are to have the Garter: *Honi soit qui mal y pensè.* There was a report that the Archbishop of Canterbury was going to be married to Mrs. Clark and her eight children; but Archbishops now a-days do not mortify the flesh at that rate; and I hear she owns with a sigh that the report is groundless. I hear Lord Bolingbroke has left two folios of metaphysics, a history of his own times, and divers other tracts; they are bequeathed to Mallet; but Will. Chetwynd and the other executors do not care to give them up. His estate was entailed. He has given four hundred pounds in legacies to his servants; but it is doubted whether those legacies, and that of his library, will stand good, as he may be more in debt than his cash will answer: and this is made a pretence for withholding the manuscripts assigned to Mallet; though I do not see that any creditors can claim a man's works: I never heard that any part of Parnassus was mortgaged. I shall be very glad when your business is finished, as I shall then hope to see you

here; you have too many virtues for the contracted life of a monk, and, I thank my stars, are bound in another vow, one more fit for you, as it is social and not selfish. Adieu, my dearest, remember I long to see you,

And am entirely your's,

E. M.

To Mrs. Montagu, from Mrs. West, wife of Gilbert West.

Wickham, March 5, 1751.

DEAR MADAM,

THE pleasure I receive from your letters convinces me public fame sometimes speaks truth, as I am sure it did when I was told Mrs. Montagu was the most agreeable correspondent in the world. As long as I enjoy that pleasure, I shall be less anxious about the remains of Madame de Sevigné's letters, though I have a great esteem and regard for her memory,

and have often wished I had lived with her aux rochers, nay sometimes have attended her, dans ses bois, entre chiens et loups. I never liked Madame de Grignan, she seems to me an affected pedant in petticoats, and too fond of pere Descartes. The account you give of her being so little concerned for the loss of so good a mother, convinces me she was good for nothing, and confirms me in the belief of the story, that she had an affair with her husband's brother, the Chevalier. Perhaps you may think it high time to say something of your cousin,* after all the kind and obliging things you have said of him; but before I proceed, pray, madam, why may not I have the honour of being your cousin as well as he? I assure you I will not cousin you till you cousin me; so begin as soon as you please. Well! now to your cousin again: he desires his best and kindest compliments to you, and fears he shall not be able to wait

* The Editor cannot recollect the origin of Mrs. Montagu and Mr. Gilbert West calling each other cousins; they were not related.

on you next week, as both his hands are very lame, * and he cannot walk without the help of them; he can but just feed himself, and play at cards; one of his ancles has had a visit, but I hope he will not have any more this time; and I flatter myself it is all over for this bout, though I always say this with fear and dread, lest I should be mistaken. If the weather should be soft and mild, I propose he shall set forth next Sunday, in the chariot, as the horse is well, and the air and exercise will do him good. Now, dear madam, give me leave to say something about your health: we are much concerned you have been ill, and have still a cough; I fear you caught cold here, and after puzzling my brains how you got it, am sure I hit upon it at last; you were prancing out in the morning before I was up, and then out again with the petit marquis; † and though it was fine over

* Mr. West's sufferings from the gout are well known. See his poem of the Triumphs of the Gout, translated from the Greek of Lucian.

† Berenger, author of the History of Horsemanship.

head, it was too damp and cold for a town lady. Now as you got your cold here, it is right you should leave it here; therefore take my advice and come down and see your cousin, and the change of air, and the asses milk will do. Put on ten clokes and josephs; as for flys and shades they will keep out the dust, but not the cold; so leave them. I am sure this advice will do you good, and it will be of infinite benefit to your cousin, and a vast pleasure to me. Mr. Montagu should insist upon your coming; but I know he had rather keep you with him; but for your good he should part with you; if he will not he may come with you, which will be still a greater pleasure to us, and by way of bribe I will give him some more pork, as I find he likes it. What can I do more to tempt him? I can't get Lady S——b; that would do; besides, as you say you have got the house, you should come down and see it. I am uneasy you have not seen it, least you should not like it; I don't like to choose a house or a husband for any body; besides, as Tubby and

I both were in earnest when we said you would be always welcome here, why would you not come and see it before you took it? we were both delighted with the account you give of the visit you had from the petit marquis; and I think I see him hopping about from chair to chair, as I always think he is like a pert cock-sparrow hopping upon the grass plot; he is a little man but a great beast; he took Tubby's canto, and was to talk to Burges about my dear boy's inoculation, and we have never heard a word from him since; I suppose he is taken up with the pleasures of the town. I hear he was coquetting with Mrs. Garrick in her box, and seemed very happy; so he thinks no more of his friends here: pray if you see him, reprimand him for it. This was to have come two days ago; but I could never get time to finish it, as reading and other avocations take up my time, and I never begin writing till almost midnight. It would have been better for dear Mrs. Montagu that I had gone to bed, than have troubled her with such a heap of

inconsistent stuff, but to those I love, my pen is as apt to gallop as my tongue, so this must be my excuse for taking up so much of your time, that would be better spent. The messenger that brings this is another cousin, but unlike the sparrow, and more like a stork, it is Mr. Lyttleton's brother that lives with him;* he desired he might keep the letter, that he might deliver it himself into your fair hands. Mr. West desires his love to his sweet cousin. Remember my advice, and come away; good night, dear Madam.

I am,

Your most obliged and faithful servant,

CATHERINE WEST.

(Saturday night past twelve.)

* Afterwards Lord Westcote.

To her Sister.

8th of May, 1751.

I AM ashamed that I have been so remiss in writing to my dear Sister, but business and amusements have poured in torrents upon me. I was some days preparing for the subscription masquerade, where I was to appear in the character of the Queen Mother, my dress white satin, with fine new point for tuckers, kerchief, and ruffles, pearl necklace, and ear rings, and pearls and diamonds on the head, and my hair curled after the Vandyke picture. Mrs. Trevor and the Lady Stanhopes adjusted my dress, so that I was one day in my life well dressed. Miss Charlotte Fane was Ruben's wife, and looked extremely well; we went together. Miss Chudleigh's dress, or rather undress, was remarkable; she was Iphigenia for the sacrifice, but so naked, the high priest might easily inspect the entrails of the victim. The maids of honour (not of maids the strictest) were so offended they would not speak to her.

Pretty Mrs. Pitt* looked as if she came from heaven, but was only on her road thither in the habit of a chanoiness. Many ladies looked handsome, and others rich; there was as great a quantity of diamonds as the town could produce. Mrs. Chandler was a starry night. The Dutchess of Portland had no jewels. Lord Sandwich made a fine hussar. Mr. Montagu has made me lay by my dress to be painted in, when I see Mr. Hoare again. His picture is thought like, but too full for my thin jaws. I staid till five o'clock in the morning at the masquerade, and was not tired. I have never been quite well since, but I had better luck than Miss Conway, who was killed by a draught of lemonade she drank there. I suppose you have heard of Lord Bolinbroke's new work; as it is short, we idle one's in London can find time to peruse it.

I am, &c. &c. &c.

E. M.

* Afterwards Lady Rivers.

To Edward Montagu, Esq.

Tunbridge, 30th August, 1751.

My Dearest,

The application with which you have followed your business in the north, is a most agreeable proof of your desire to return. I am drinking the waters very successfully. As to pleasure, it does not abound in the public rooms. Crowds are generally gay, but there is a want of spirits in our company, which I imagine to be owing to the frequency of assemblies, and the general dissipation of the present life. When the country lady came hither from domestic cares and attendance on her dairy and hen-roost, and her cherry cheek'd daughter from plain work and pastry, the mechanic's wife from attendance on her shop and accounts, Tunbridge was a place of recreation, but now the squire's lady comes from whisk in assemblies, miss from Ranelagh, and the bonne bourgeoise from

Marybone Gardens; it is but the same scene on another stage. An old French historian, speaking of the behaviour of the English after a victory, says, "Les "Anglois, selon leur coutume, se diver-"tissoient moult tristement;" if such be their humour that they can divert themselves but *tristement* after danger and labour overcome, and an advantage gained, how *triste* must their amusements be, when pursued to the neglect of many advantages, and without the contrast of intervals of business and application! Our airy neighbours, the French, have a sort of animal spirits, which enable them to frisk about the fields of joy; English John Trot can go far on a reasonable errand, but he wants the légereté that is necessary to tread the fantastic round of pleasure. The Dutchess of Norfolk being indisposed to-day, talks of leaving the place, though she has not drank the water a week. The Dutchess of Newcastle is coming to this place very ill; I believe the unhappy state of public affairs makes her so. "Ambition should be made of

"sterner stuff." The wife of a first minister should not have weak nerves. She is very fond of her husband, and he has great confidence in her, and trusts her with all his cares and solicitudes; a very heavy charge, I should think. As to poor Mrs. Percival, I hailed her voyage to the realms of rest; but for poor Shaw, he might have lived, and laughed, and talked of the deluge, and collected cockle-shells many years longer. The death of those we esteem afflicts us; we are shocked at the death of those we have laughed at, and laughed with, as we never looked upon them in so serious a light, as to suppose so sad an event could happen to them. I would deck his tomb with emblems of all the wonders of the land and deep; crocodiles should weep and tigers howl; every shell should become vocal; sea weed should bloom immortal on his tomb, and moss, though petrified, lie lightly on his breast. What signify voyages? what signifies learning? Hebrew Professor! Traveller to Memphis! sole witness living of the pre-

sent state of the Ptolomies! Must all these glories sink into oblivion? How gloriously had he been interred had he died in the perilous pass of the pyramids, and succeeded Mark Antony in the bed of Cleopatra! I hope the poor man will have the satisfaction of being embalmed in the true Egyptian manner, for the more like a mummy his body be made, the more it will joy his gentle ghost. The ladies here are all sighing and languishing for my father's company. His friend, Mr. Trevor, shone out one day in a fine gold coat, and has not been seen since. I am tired of the place, and should have a much worse time of it, if it were not for my cheerful friends.* We borrow our evening's amusement from books. I have but a slight acquaintance with the Muses, but have love enough for them, never to be unhappy in their company. Though the education of women is always too frivolous, I am glad mine had such a qualification of the

* Mr. Gilbert West, his wife, and his son, who were in the house with her.

serious, as to fit me for the relish of the *belles bagatelles.* You are now in a place very different from this, where all people are engaged in business, and in the pursuit of riches. Their children will come to Tunbridge, for the caterpillar no sooner gets gaudy wings, than he forgets his creeping life, and idly sports in the sunshine of the world. I should be well pleased with a sight of Newcastle.* Riches drawn from the bowels of the earth, or gained by commerce, where exchange is still a mutual benefit, present agreeable views of the arts and policy of mankind. Though the coldness of our climate may set coals in a favourable light, I shall be glad to see as many of them turned to the precious metal as possible. I have not enough of the miser, to love treasures hidden and buried. Money is convertible to credit and pleasure; useful in the hands of the prudent; noble in the hands of the generous; pernicious with the

* Mr. Montagu was then visiting the estates of his relation, Mr. Rogers, a lunatic, of whom he was the Committee, and from whom he afterwards inherited them.

bad; ridiculous with the prodigal, and contemptible with the miser. I have a very good opinion of Mr. Montagu and his wife. I like the prospect of these golden showers, and so I congratulate you upon them, but most of all, I congratulate you upon the disposition of mind which made you put the account of them in a postscript. Were we to make petitions to fate, we should put riches in the postscript; by no means forget them quite.

I am, my dearest, ever your's,

E. M.

To the Same.

Tunbridge, September, 1751.

My Dearest,

This place continues to encrease in company. We have crowds, and very little amusement; and foreigners, and very little variety. The Duke of Newcastle

was at a ball last night, given by Mr. Connor, to the politest part of the company. The busy statesman was written on his brow; he whispered to the foreign ministers with all the seriousness of a negociator, though I verily believe he was only talking of Lewes races. Sir Thomas Robinson was no less embarrassed with the business of doing the honours to the secretary of state, than the secretary of state with doing the business of the nation. There are some reflections and characters in La Bruyere, which would have fitted them both, but far be it from me to quote them in a letter to travel by the post. We expect those goddesses, the Gunnings; and Sir Thomas Robinson, after being master of the ceremonies to the French ambassador, and our secretary of state, proposes to be gallant to these fair dames. My father is very gay. Sir William Brown starts many arguments for his amusement. Mr. West reads to us in an evening, and the wit of the last age supplies us, when we do not meet with any

in this. I suppose my brother Robinson is by this time returning to the known world; I expect to hear that he has travelled to the extremity of Scotland, for he is a man of infinite curiosity, and would have "knowledge at no entrance "quite shut out;" those things he cannot examine by question, he will examine by view.* Discontents among the ministers are still rumoured; what will happen from the long threatened storm among them I know not, but I believe the loss or benefit will be confined to a few individuals, and relate but little to the general good. If I were to measure your stay at Newcastle, by my regret at your absence, I should think you had spent much time there; but considered by the business you have dispatched, my reason confesses the haste you have made. To your prayer that we may not again be so long separated, I can with much zealous fervour say amen. I shall rejoice to see little Sandleford again, and in your

* Her elder brother attended Lord Sandwich to Aix la Chapelle in 1748, at the negotiation of the peace.

company to enjoy the best blessing, golden leisure, which the busy ills of life have taught me to esteem. When one is very young and full of the hopes of inexperience, one looks forward from pleasure to pleasure; a few years more make us see tranquillity with as great eagerness. I can even bid the "mute silence hist "along," and love the negative pleasures of solitude. Wisdom, we are told, cries in the streets, but folly, ever great in noise, cries louder. Young Wortley is gone to France with Miss Ash. He is certainly a gentleman of infinite vivacity, but methinks he might as well have deferred this exploit till the death of his father. M——'s friend, Miss G——, made me a visit yesterday; would you believe it? If Paris had been here to give a crab to the ugliest, worst shaped woman at Tunbridge, she would have borne away the acid apple: it is absolutely true. I compared her to hundreds, she was the foulest: I measured her with hundreds, she was the most crooked. If the god of riches does not favour M—— for this

enthusiasm, he is an ungrateful deity. To pass through fire to Moloch, is a sacrifice of less horror, than to pass through deformity to wedlock. May health and pleasure attend you; I shall be glad when they travel with you towards London; the first you will find has been my companion, the other you will bring with you to me.

I am, my dearest,

Your most faithful and affectionate wife,

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Heys, September 30, 1751.

I CAME hither this morning to enjoy the quiet, leisure, exercise, and air, one cannot have in London. I am so well in health, that I do not know myself, and I think I am a little like the humourous

Lieutenant, that would run no hazards while he was well, though he was prodigal of life, when he had a pain in his side. I am very desirous to preserve this comfortable state of health, and also my plump and jolly condition. My face is no longer a memento mori. I look like one of the goddess Hebe's elder sisters, not ever fair and young, but not so wan and decayed as of late. I met Mr. Marriot this morning, on his way from Tunbridge: he travelled with less parade than last year; no empty bottles to signify there had been wine; no hoop petticoat to shew his society complete; no boy that appeared by the shortness of his habit, to be of his clothing. He was travelling in a common post chaise, at the expence of fourpence halfpenny a mile, the other half being paid by his companion. Marriot's muse, though she has long been hoarse, is not yet dumb. He rhymed on every subject, from the tall Lady Lincoln, to misses no taller than mushrooms. As Solomon valued himself that he could reason on all plants,

from the cedar to the hyssop, so does Marriot, that he can sing of all nymphs, from the Brobdignaggian to the Lilliputian fair. I thank you for taking constant exercise on horseback. I will do all in my power to keep with me the lovely stranger, health.

I am, my dearest,
most faithfully and affectionately yours,

E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

London, Oct. 31st, 1751.

DEAR COUSIN,

THE great offenders of our days, of both sexes, have been very fond of writing their apologies; for my part, I had rather employ my pen on any subject, than one so delicate and tender as my own transgressions or omissions; so I am glad that I can now tell you the principal commissions I was charged with, are duly executed. Mr. Linnell told me yesterday,

that he was going to send your chimney-piece by the carrier: I hope it will please you; it can indeed make but a very inconsiderable ornament to a fireside, where the social virtues always sit: in London we poorly supply their place in our chimney corners, by marble bosoms without hearts, and finely sculptured heads without brains; however, I am far from thinking the cherubs on my chimney-piece the worst tête à tête in town; they have lost nothing of their native firmness by being highly polished, nor of their purity by being in the fine world. I was very sorry to hear you had been threatened with the gout. I hope you will hear no more of a distemper that could subdue any patience but yours, a trophy you have never added to "the triumphs of the "gout." Poor Dr. Courayer notified to me that he was ill of a sore throat, and could not come to visit me, though he wanted to see me; to make this matter easy, I went to him: I was obliged to pass through all the gay vanities of Mrs. Chenevix, and then ascend a most steep

and difficult staircase, to get at the little philosopher; this way to wisdom through the vanities and splendid toys of the world, might be prettily allegorized by the pen of the great Bunyan, and the good man himself, to an emblematizing genius, would have afforded an ample subject: his head was enfoncée in a cap of the warmest beaver, made still more respectable by a gold orris; "a wonderous hieroglyphic robe he wore,"* in which was pourtrayed all the attributes of the god Fo, with the arms and achievements of the cham of Tartary. Never did Christian doctor wear such a pagan appearance; one would have imagined he had been sent hither from Tonquin, to propagate idolatrous worship. When I ceased to look upon him as a missionary, I began to consider him as the best piece of Chinese furniture I had ever seen, and could hardly forbear offering him a place on my chimney-piece; he asked much after your health, and with so much regard, I am convinced he is still a good

* A chintz dressing gown.

Christian at heart, though his habit is heathenish. The town is much amused with the story of the disastrous adventure of our cousin, Wortley Montagu, jun., and the famous Mr. Taaffe, at Paris: these gentlemen are both sent to Fort l'Eveque, and from thence may possibly be transferred to the gallies, for having played with a jew at Pharon, with too much finesse; finesse is a pretty improvement in modern life, and modern language; it is something people may do without being hanged, and speak of without being challenged; it is a point just beyond fair skill, and just short of downright knavery; but as the medium is ever hard to hit, the very professors of finesse do sometimes deviate into paths that lead to prisons and the gallies, and such is the case of these unhappy heroes. The Speaker of the House of Commons will be grieved to see two illustrious senators chained at the ignoble oar. The King of France has been applied to, but he says he does not interpose in private matters; so how it will go with them no one can tell:

in the meantime, poor Miss Ash weeps like the forsaken Ariadne on a foreign shore. There has been a terrible fracas in the court of the grand monarque; the people, generally credulous, have strangely taken it into their heads, that the Duke of Burgundy is not legitimate, and instead of acclamations and huzzas, murmurs and sighs have echoed through the streets, on the days the feasts were made for the birth of this child; besides this, there was conveyed into the cradle some gunpowder and a match, with an epigram, expressing that they would serve to blow up the pretended Duke of Burgundy. Upon his Majesty's hearing this, the gouvernante, sub-gouvernante, women of the bed-chamber, even to the toothless pap-tasters, were all sent to the Bastille; one of the women, who said she saw a hand reach over a screen to throw a paper into the cradle, is since dead. A little knowledge is allowed to be a dangerous thing; had the lady been able to have informed his Majesty at once who threw the paper, she had been safe, but it is supposed the hand that threw it, lest

she should discover more, gave her a dose that has silenced her for ever. There is a piece come out, by King Stanislaus, to prove mankind receive more prejudice than benefit from arts and sciences; this is answered by a citizen, I think, of Genoa.* For my part, I will read the royal writer; I always imagined a diadem the best charm against thinking, but his Majesty of Prussia, and King Stanislaus dare reason, and boldly too. It is strange though, that kings should talk of the mischiefs of arts and sciences, when they, good creatures, enjoy all the comforts and luxuries they procure, without the trouble of attaining any. The Duke and Dutchess of Portland, and Lord Titchfield dined with us to day, and staid till eight o'clock; her Grace enquired after you. I said I should write to you if my head would give me leave, (which by the bye aches intolerably), she desired her compliments. Mr. Montagu desires his compliments to you, Mrs. West, and your

* "Rousseau's work, sur la Question si le retablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs."

son; mine attend both my amiable and well beloved cousins; I hope one of them drinks Spa water, and the other Helicon.

I am, Sir,

Your most affectionate cousin, and obliged, and faithful humble Servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 17th of Dec. 1751.

MY good cousin was so obliging as to desire to hear from me as soon as I was settled at Sandleford, but ill as I am at present, I should not trouble him with a letter, if I did not earnestly desire to hear of his health.* I had flattered myself you would pass the winter without any complaint, and that health would make

* Mr. West and Mrs. Montagu being both invalids, their letters, especially Mr. West's, are too much filled with mutual enquiries on the subject of health.

you amends for the time my cousin and you sacrificed to me at Tunbridge. I should be very ungrateful, if I did not wish you a temporary benefit, from what I hope will prove for me a lasting advantage:* this authorises me to say, that if you measure my concern for your welfare, by the obligations I have to you, you will excuse my giving you the trouble to inform me of your state of health, and also of Mrs. West's, who seemed recovering her happy and agreeable spirits, if your indisposition has not again depressed them; and all this may be brought into the compass of one line, though written in capital letters. Pray have you made a good Protestant of Mr. Hooke?† If you cure heresy and schism, should you not have your doctor's degree in divinity rather than law? I cannot give you a

* Mr. West's conversation had a great influence on Mrs. Montagu in regard to religion.

† Hooke, the author of the Roman History, was a Mystic, and a Quietist, and a warm disciple of Fenelon. He brought a Catholic priest to Pope on his death bed.

good account of my time; I have scarcely been able to read at all, but perhaps sickness gives as good lessons as may be had from books, and better a great deal than we may expect from Lord Bolingbroke, who, I hear, will leave behind him a new system of morality, which is to comprehend all speculative and practical things, and to reconcile all that in the moral system, seems to shock and surprise; but, I believe, my friend, it is not in mere philosophy *to justify the ways of God to man.* As to the rules of conduct to be given by this noble writer, I hope they will not be such as have governed him; for should they make us what they have left him, virtue would be no great gainer; none of the boisterous passions of his youth restrained; none of the peevish or mischievous ones of his old age mitigated or allayed: envy, ambition, and anger, gnawing and burning in his heart to the last. May this find you all in health; on that subject, only do you put your friends to the expence of a wish, or pain of a solicitude; a mind like yours

has every other felicity in *the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever.*

I am Sir, with the highest esteem,
your most affectionate cousin, obliged
and faithful friend,

E. M.

---

*To the Same.**

Sandleford, the 26th of May, 1752.

DEAR COUSIN,

I WAS informed by Mrs. Isted, that you intended to return to town in the middle of this week, so I imagine that by this time you are in the empire of China. The leafless trees, and barren soil of my landscape, will very ill bear a comparison with the shady oaks and beautiful verdure

* This letter is addressed to Mr. West, at Mrs. Montagu's house in Hill-street, where he was residing at the time, for the purpose of attending the privy council, to which he had been recently appointed clerk. She was then fitting up a room in the Chinese taste.

of South Lodge,* and the grinning mandarins still worse supply the place of a British statesman: but as you can improve every society and place into which you enter, I expect such hints from you as will set off the figures, and enliven the landscape into rural beauty. I grieved at the rain, from an apprehension that it might interfere wish your pleasure at South Lodge; I hope it did not, but that you saw the place with the leisure and attention it deserves; if you give me an account of the parts of it which charmed you most, or of the whole, you will lead my imagination to a very fine place in very good company, and I shall walk over it with great pleasure. I imagine you would feel some poetic enthusiasm in the temple of Pan, and hope it produced a hymn or ode, in which we shall see him, "knit with the Graces, and the "Hours in dance lead on the eternal "spring," through groves of your unfading bays. I hope you do not attribute

* Then the residence of Mr. Pitt.

my pleasure in receiving your letters, or readiness to answer them, merely to a Chinese taste. I think it may be owing to a better cause, an admiration of what is beautiful in sentiment and morals, rather than for the fantastic and grotesque in forms and figure: so though I am pleased with the perfection my room will receive from your assistance, and much obliged to you for the trouble you take on that account, accept my first thanks for the more rational and elegant part of my pleasure, the letters it occasions you to write. If Mr. Linnell designs to gild the bird he sent me the drawing of, it will look like the sign of the eagle at a laceman's door. If japanned in proper colours, it will resemble a bird only in colour, for in shape it is as like an horse. I wish these men of art could sometimes deviate into the natural. I approve well of the carved canopy, and for the painted one, I am willing it should be effaced if you think the place will look better without it. I consider such canopies with the utmost contempt, while I look up to that now

over my head: my desk and I are placed under the shade of some noble elms which partly exclude the garish eye of day. I assure you I have great attentions to my health, and to enjoy the more of the balmy breath of this sweet season, my hours either of idleness or occupation are chiefly spent in the garden; of late the bright and fervent beams of Phœbus have sent me under "arched roofs of twilight "groves," and at this time of the year I should prefer my sylvan palace to the Louvre, as indeed the work of a nobler architect, and the abode of worthier inhabitants, whose soft notes soothe without the arts of flattery. The heart must want benevolence that is not cheered by sounds of joy, and it is not the smallest and most inconsiderable advantage belonging to the human species, that we are so made as to be partakers of all the happiness, and spectators of all the beauty in the animal, or inanimate part of the creation, while the individuals of other species have only their peculiar share of com-

forts, and their observation probably is confined to a few objects.

> The soul proud science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk or milky way,

may, in each grove and meadow, find enough to admire and delight in, and without the helps of science to investigate the great laws of the universe, may, by even a slight observation of his lowest works, adore and thank the great Author with the highest reverence and gratitude. I have for many years had a taste for rural pleasures, which people seldom find during their youth and gay season of life. Mr. Pope says, " ill health is an early old age;" it is so indeed, in bringing on weakness and infirmity, but perhaps it makes one fond of a tranquil life. A cheerful prospect, the song of a linnet, a fragrant gale from sweet shrubs or flowers, and many gentle subjects delight a mind softened by the gentle decays brought on by frequent indispositions, which perhaps are despised and overlooked by persons

in the joy and pride of health. A mind once properly harmonized, may have its tone softened and lowered by sickness, but will hardly be put out of tune; and if the harmony be but preserved, it is sufficient, no matter for the key. I fear you find your place rather a misfortune, while it calls you from the gentle shades of Wickham, to the dust of Hill-street; and yet I cannot help wishing you had more of fortune's embarrassments. The first grace is to appear well without rich ornaments, the second, to move easily and well under them; pardon me for wishing to lower your character from the highest to the second degree. I am sorry to hear Sir George Lyttleton and Miss West are to go to Tunbridge so soon, for I fear they will leave the place the earlier, as they go at the beginning of the season. I hope to arrive the beginning of next month. Perhaps you will receive a visit to-morrow from my brother William, who, I imagine may pass a day or two in Hill-street, in his way to this place; I wrote to him my advice to take this opportunity

to pay his respects to you, but possibly a little college aukwardness, added to natural timidity, may prevent his doing it. I assure you he is a very good young man, more I will not say, for having for some years had a mother's care of him, I have also a mother's partiality: perhaps you may like him the better for his resemblance to your son; I shall be glad of every thing that can recommend him to your notice. I am glad Lady Di: has shewn her spirit while it is time; but surely the young man wants discernment, not to distinguish between characters so very different, as the lover's and the husband's.

I am, dear Cousin,

Your most obliged and faithful friend,

ELIZA MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge Wells, Wednesday, Sept. 2d, 1752.

To say I regret the loss of your company at this place, and in my present situation, would very ill express the value I set on your conversation, and I should be cautious of even appearing to fall short in my estimation of it, as it is by that only I can be at all worthy of the pleasures and advantages that arise from it. The weather has been very bad ever since you left us, and many people are gone away, which I less wonder at than to see their places supplied by a new set: as to the change of company on the walks, I regard it no more than the succession of vegetables in the garden: they vary the prospect indeed, but make little difference in the pleasure of the walk, and one scarce observes whether the early primrose, or Michaelmas daisy enamel the pastures. Sir W. Brown has left us; I hear he retreated with discontent; he thought himself ill rewarded

for the pains he took to canvass all subjects, and inform all hearers. He has not found out that the wisest man in the company is not always the most welcome, and that people are not at all times disposed to be informed. I hope Miss Speed likes her hat; I am sorry she had it not earlier in the summer, such a bergere would bring pastoral life into fashion. Your admirer, Mr. Coventry, enquired after you this morning. I was not at the ball last night, but the misses say it was a very agreeable one; perhaps they liked it the better as Miss Bladen was not there to outshine them, for so strong in woman is the laudable desire of pleasing, each would have that happy power confined entirely to her own person. I have observed for some days, that Lady Abercorn and Lady Townshend, each determining to have the most wit of any person in the company, always choose different parties and different ends of the room. Dr. Stewart has been here two or three days, but I am not acquainted with him, so I cannot tell you whether he comes

here as a physician or an invalid. Pray tell me if my* Lydia has not a fine little family, and whether you do not think she makes an amiable figure amongst them, though indeed she is now in too weak a state to shine out in her full lustre. Mr. Montagu desires I would say a great deal for him, and tell you how much he regrets the loss of your company; but indeed I know not how to express either our obligations to you for the time you bestowed on us, nor the reluctance with which one parts with such a friend and companion; in return I can only wish you every felicity this life affords. I desire my best respects to Mrs. West, and compliments to Lady Cobham and Miss Speed: I wish the fair shepherdess a happy meeting with her pastor fido,† at the next masquerade, for I think it is more probable she will meet him there, than under the shady oak or spreading beech. When

* Mrs. Botham, by birth a Miss Lumley, of the Scarborough family.

† Miss Speed married the Comte de Viri, Minister from the King of Sardinia.

you go to Bullstrode, make my compliments to the Dutchess, and tell her I propose to write to her as soon as I leave the stupifying springs of Tunbridge, which might petrify a genius to a dunce: think what must be their effect on an ordinary brain! However, I am not so stupified as not to know ten thousand reasons why I should be ever Mr. West's admirer, friend, &c. &c.

ELIZA MONTAGU.

---

*To her Sister, now Mrs. Scott.**

Tunbridge, the 14th September, 1752.

DEAR SISTER,

To my great comfort we leave Tunbridge on Monday. I propose to go to Hinch-

* Mrs. Montagu's sister married George Lewis Scott, Esq. She formed a very intimate friendship with Lady Barbara Montagu, sister of the Earl of Halifax. They lived together many years until Lady Barbara's death. Mrs. Scott published the life of Theodore Agrippa

ingbroke in a few days. I long to see poor Sandleford; I shall not find it in beauty; it will have lost its vernal honours, but quiet and leisure will be there. Sir Dudley and Lady Ryder came hither about ten days ago; she enquired after your health, and desired I would tell you she would have wrote to you, if she could have wrote as well as you do; I told her you had so great a regard for her, I was sure her letters would give you great pleasure. I am charmed with the attorney-general; so much cheerfulness and ease in a man so engaged in business surprises me; it must be a strong mind that does not find itself incumbered and embarrassed in such employments, and an amiable one that is not hardened by them. The attorney was sent for to London yesterday in haste, I presume to the privy council; they are to return on Saturday, and dine with us on Sunday, which will leave a better impression of the pleasures

D'Aubigné. The life of Gustavas Vasa. Also Sir George Ellison, and Millennium Hall, two novels.

of Tunbridge than I should have otherwise. I am glad Lord and Lady Halifax are coming to Bath, as it will be a great pleasure to Lady Bab. Lady Dupplin, I suppose, is converted from a love to consecrated oil, and the hope of extreme unction, for she is a lover of grease: I suppose she has a dispensation to forbear the use of holy water; she has an abhorrence of all kinds of ablution. I never saw a place more entirely disagreeable than this is now; I sigh for Monday. The weather is so bad, one cannot walk, and I have no amusement during the drinking the water, but hearing a parcel of strange folks tell their diseases and their dreams. Mrs. Barker (our Bath friend) held forth an hour, to prove that if she had gone away yesterday, she should not have been here to day, and though perhaps your limited understanding may not see a possibility of denying the proposition, after she had talked an hour upon it, I began to doubt, and to avoid a dispute, for I felt myself inclined to the other side of the argument, I rose up and went to the

other end of the room, but I hope this duplicity only regards Mrs. Barker, for I should be inconsolable, if, going away on Monday, I should find myself here on Tuesday. I had a great loss of the Russian Ambassadress, she was all that was left of our party, and she is lively and agreeable, and I had got over the shame of speaking bad French. I like Lady Ryder extremely, but she ran away with her husband yesterday morning.

I am,

your most affectionate Sister,

and sincere Friend,

E. MONTAGU.

To Edward Montagu, Esq.

Heys, 7th October, 1752.

MY DEAREST,

YOUR letter from Canterbury was an agreeable instance how readily you embrace

all opportunities of making me happy. I was truly rejoiced to hear you got so far on your journey safe and well, and am glad you contrived to pick up some amusement from objects on the road. I can easily imagine the tower of the Cathedral shewed a fine prospect, as the environs of Canterbury are rich and well cultivated, and the whole face of the country is adorned with many fine features smiling with peace and plenty. The inside of the Gothic building is fine, and its silent inhabitants present to one's mind some of the most eminent characters in the British annals. The turbulent Becket lies there as quiet as a parish priest, neither his own presumption as in life, nor others credulity as soon after his death, rendering him formidable or respectable. The black Prince's tomb demands perhaps more lamentations from a true Englishman than the more recent loss of another Prince of Wales. Edward was a patriot Prince without a Bolingbroke for his preceptor. Civil government had not then been treated by the pens of the learned,

nor was policy the study of men retired, but the generous, wise, and brave, from the suggestions of their own minds, knew how to protect liberty and encourage arts. What shall we urge in favour of ages of refinement, if in the more rough and rude ones, when virtue was less in theory, it was more in practice? must we think the world, like an old man, reasons wisely, but is grown too weak for actions of great force and moment? in all things this age can discourse more aptly than the former, but whoever reads the annals, will hardly give us the palm of victory and preference. I was airing this morning, and I took more pleasure in the fine weather, as I hoped you were partaking its pleasures and benefits. The country looks very beautiful, the shades of autumn improve the landscape, but they suggest the approach of winter, so that one loses by reflection, the pleasure one receives by sight; the robin's notes, gentle as they sound to the ear, threaten the mind with the rough season of the year. I am sorry your horse does not like hard road, for

the ways about Horton are very stony. A dull horse is like a dull friend; one is safe, though not much delighted in his company; I had rather trust you to an animal whose vivacity is not greater than his discretion; but if want of spirit make him stumble, harm may happen that way; so pray take care. Adieu! my dearest, may you find amusement every where, but the most perfect happiness with her, who is by every grateful and tender sentiment,

Your most affectionate
and faithful wife,
E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, the 26th November, 1752.

MY most amiable and valuable Cousin,

YOUR letter, like manna in the wilderness, was a very sweet and pleasant refreshment, seasonably and kindly bestowed,

and rather wished for than expected or deserved by one in a distant and desolate situation, while you live within the sphere though not in the centre of the world's business and pleasures. You talk of courts and councils, of kissing the hands of Kings and Princes, and such things as in my sequestered bower were totally forgotten. You introduce me to a known world when you carry me into a garden planted with firs and laurel, and you offer them to me for subjects of moral reflections, for which, as you rightly judge, I have by nature and circumstances, all the leisure and dulness from whence they usually proceed. You seem so satisfied in your choice of plants, it would be barbarous to say any thing against so well weighed an opinion, and perhaps, considering how small a part of time they share,

> That are both wonderous sweet and fair,

you may do best to prefer the lasting to the delicate beauties of nature: however, I am far from thinking, as you seem to

do, that you have triumphed over the power of Time. You have deferred to him as men do to a tyrant in a rigorous government, where the penalty of sumptuary laws imposes an involuntary temperance in luxury and ornament, and they can escape the fine only by homely plainness and rigid simplicity. There are animals and vegetables whose existence is bounded by the evening and morning of the same day, and we should probably laugh, if the day-fly on the day-lily was to complain of the frailty of its habitation; yet when the changing mind of man is seeking permanent objects, it is much the same case. I have generally seen that the possessors of the most fading subjects were weary of them before their decay. Indeed, Cousin, you must let me laugh at so ill-grounded an hope as that of unwearied pleasure in unvarying objects. That you may not be too vain of your ever or never-green garden, remember that while you avoid the winter, you exclude the spring, and forbid the glad return of the vernal season, as well

as the sad approach of autumn. In your garden and in your life, may all that is necessary for shade, for shelter, and for comfort, be permanent and unchanging; may the pleasures and aromatics be various, successive, sweet, and new! The shades of Pindus alone afford delight at this inclement season of the year. There the beams of Phœbus give light and warmth, the zephyrs breathe soft gales, and incessant music fills the grove. However, I do not resign all pretension to a walk round Wickham gardens, because I prefer your province in Parnassus, to your territory in Kent; but I must most admire those plants of celestial seed, where the sweetness of the rose and delicacy of the lily, are joined to the permanency of the ever green, and will flourish in unfading bloom through ages. I shall be much obliged to you, if, when you see the incomparable Mr. Bower, you will get of him the second volume of the History of the Popes, Mrs. Isted having mislaid the receipt, I never sent for it; but I have almost finished Mr. Hooke's history, and I do not care to quit

the city of Rome till I have seen the establishment of its spiritual monarchy. Strange that it should become the mistress of the world both by Mars and the Prince of Peace: and I think it must be more amusing to observe, the subtile arts of policy "creeping obliquely to its treacherous ends," than the violence of heroic valour, and the open force of

"Reckless ambition, that right onward wends."

Indeed I have been sometimes almost out of patience at the Romans for "fighting still, and still destroying," adorning their city with military triumphs, but not with the great ornaments of human society, sciences and arts; they subdued barbarians, but not barbarity; their liberty indeed they nobly maintained, but she is a rude divinity by herself, chiefly valuable as the mother of science, "the fairer daughter of a mother fair." I admire Mr. Hooke more than the Romans he writes of; he seems to have the spirit of liberty, with all the arts she protects. I have been much obliged to him for many

agreeable hours; the great events of history make a pleasing variety, and chequer well with the little details of life. To go from the toilette to the senate-house: from the head of the table to the head of an army; or, after making tea for a country justice, to attend the exploits, councils, and harangues of a Roman consul, gives all the variety the busy find in the bustle of the world, and variety and change (except in a garden) make the happiness of our lives. But alas, how poor is the present instant, that it is forced to beg its amusement of times past, or to come; the departed, or the unborn hour, must lend events or hopes to entertain the present minute. Life is like the tragedy of Hamlet, there must be a play in a play, one tale and fable included in another, to bring on the catastrophe, and fill the spaces with amusing representation. If you please to leave Mr. Bower's history with Ann, I shall order it hither some time hence, when I send for some other things. Do not forget my compliments to the author, I am sure he well deserves them, while I am owing so excellent an

entertainment to his labours; I suppose he is settled in town by this time, and then the Madonna* will be glad to find him when she returns to the regions of life. I have just received a collection of letters, wrote by Madame de Maintenon, though Voltaire has diminished my opinion of her in some degree: yet I have an impatience to open the book: I shall like to see what alteration there is in her from the wife and widow of poor Scarron, to becoming the consort of Louis le Grand. I see the first letters are written in her humble state; I have but this instant opened the pacquet, and I must write two letters, and walk two miles before I can give audience even to the great Maintenon: you will imagine that I am in extraordinary health, when I talk of walking two miles in a morning.

I am, dear Sir,
Your sincere and most affectionate friend and cousin,

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

* Mr. Bower wrote frequently to Mrs. Montagu in Italian. The name of Madonna was applied to her also by Lord Lyttelton and Mr. West.

To the Hon. Mrs. Boscawen.

Dec. 24th, 1752.

I proposed answering my dear Mrs. Boscawen's letter yesterday, but the Chinese room was filled by a succession of people from eleven in the morning till eleven at night. I am glad Madame de Staal amused you, for I cannot help thinking it is possible to want amusement by the fire side in the country; Madame de la Ferté's character, I believe, must appear more natural to the French than to us; and yet even in our country, where there is so much less of vivacity and changeableness of disposition, one has seen what is not unlike it in people whose rank and fortune have allowed them to indulge every humour and caprice. I cannot say that I love Madame de Staal well enough to pity her so much as her misfortunes deserve; adversity mends her head, but not her heart; her reason is improved, but not her temper. For my part I own myself a severe critic in temper; talents of the

understanding are the gifts of heaven, and of those only to whom much is given, much should be required; but it seems to me, that all people have it in their power in a great degree to mitigate the faults of temper; the wise should do it that they may be loved, the foolish that they may be endured. I know if M. de Staal was looking over my shoulder, she would say I could not pardon her pettishness because I looked upon her as a chambermaid; and that the same fault in the Dutchess of Maine would have offended me less: I will allow this in part, for the Dutchess never felt the misery of peevishness and of insolence from a superior; and was therefore less apprized of the ill she did in tyrannizing over her attendants, than M. de Staal in teizing her servants; but if it was a greater crime in the inferior, it would have been a greater indecorum in the great lady. People in a high rank ought to be well instructed in all their duties, and acquit themselves of them with grace as well as justice. I cannot say I was very much amused with

the Memoirs; as they were recommended, I read them; as you observe, they agree with my opinion of a court; and yet they have more of the miseries of servitude than of the evils of a court in them; personal jealousies, little tracasseries, and the business of faction are not there described, as royal power was not belonging to that court; nor is there set forth the wretchedness "of

> That poor man that hangs on princes favours;
> There is, betwixt that smile he would aspire to,
> That sweet aspect of princes and his ruin,
> More pangs and fears than wars and women have."

But this testimony, you will say, is given by Woolsey, descending from the ladder of greatness; and it is true, those who are ascending have their heads too giddy to form any serious judgment. In ambition they judge worst who see the objects nearest. The papers will inform you of the filling the places, with at least as much certainty as I can do; ourfriend, the amiable Miss Pitt was with me last night; she desired me to say she loves and honours

you. If Mr. Botham has Homer's Odyssey I recommend it to your perusal; Penelope is not at all like Madame de la Ferté.

Adieu, dear Madam.

To Edward Montagu, Esq.

Heys.

My Dearest,

I hope this will find you safe and well at a place where I am sure the society will be pleased and happy to receive you. It adds much to the mortifications of infirm health that it incapacitates me for visiting my friends. I suppose you will see the place with great veneration, where your consort's virtues, charms, and accomplishments were ripened into their present state of perfection. I hope the sight of so many merry bachelors does not revive in you the love of a single state; their's is

the joy of the wicked, not the pure comforts of a holy state like matrimony: if they can laugh, it is well, and while they are young and gay their condition is not to be pitied, but when they come into the lean and slippered pantalon, then they will find their condition most sadly forlorn. Poor Mr. Brockman is the only m[illegible]ly sensible of the evils of celibacy, [illegible]weeps and will not be comforted, [illegible]married men should do, were they [illegible]sensible of their misfortune.

My sister writes word that the Duke of Cumberland was received with great affection by the populace at Bath; they called him their Joshua, their deliverer, the saviour of their lives and liberties, and the town was quite crowded by people who came from the neighbouring villages. Miss G—— has given her name to her husband; indeed if he accepts her person he may take any thing else that belongs to her. Lady Sandwich gives me a good account of her son.

Mr. Bower and his wife are to come to me on Friday, and stay till Sunday or

Monday; he is a very merry entertaining companion; he left all gloominess in that seat of horrors the Inquisition. I breakfasted with him on Tuesday; he is but between two and three miles from Heys; his wife is civil and silent, so I asked her to come over with him. I never saw any country more beautiful than about Chislehurst, where he lives; I cannot say much in praise of his habitation, which he calls his Paradiso; but indeed to [illegible] as gay and chearful as his, all places [illegible] a paradise. He is much engaged with those old ladies the popes, but says he will leave the Santi Padri for his Madonna; he will teach me the pronunciation of Italian, which he has reduced into such a method, it may be easily acquired. He taught it to Mr. Garrick at Tunbridge.

I lament that I am not with you; besides the pleasure of seeing my brothers, I should have reviewed with satisfaction the place where I spent the careless days of infancy, and the more gay ones of early youth. To the fair the years from fifteen to twenty are very agreeable

While we are pleasing, we are pleased; so grateful is the heart of woman. The wise man was mistaken, who allied vanity to vexation; he might have made the latter tread on the heels of the former, but they seldom go hand in hand. The king will be over by the tenth of next month, but the yatchts are not ordered, as the papers have said. My love to the gentlemen of Horton.

I am, my dearest,
your most faithful, affectionate,
and obedient wife,
E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, 6th of January.

My most excellent and honoured Cousin,

I TAKE the first opportunity to return my most sincere thanks for the acceptable favour of your last letter. The wounds friendship has made, friendship can best

medicine." I have on this melancholy occasion found the strongest proofs of regard from all my friends, and one is never more touched by them than when one's heart is tender and sore with affliction. I know not what I said in my letter, for my mind was so shocked at my arrival here, that for some days I was insupportably low. I find by yours that my letter was very short, I am now better able to attend to the voice of reason and duty, and you have with the utmost force, as well as tenderness, urged their best arguments. I will own myself to blame for not calling them sufficiently to my assistance, assured as I am, I should not then have sunk so low. A friendship begun in infancy, and re-united by our common loss and misfortune, had many tender ties. I agree with you, that my friend was not happy, but she grew daily more contented. By tender care, I had raised her from despair almost to tranquillity. I had hourly the greatest of pleasures, that of obliging a most grateful person. That I did thus hourly please her, was her merit, not mine,

for she made every employment undertaken for me, and every expression of my satisfaction in her execution of those employments, a pleasure. The servile ministry of millions of mercenary or timorous slaves cannot give the pleasure I received from her kind offices, which, however considerable, still fell short of the zeal that prompted them. Of this you can have no imagination, unless you had known her intimately, nor do I know there is a pattern of it left in the world. She was much endeared, and her loss embittered to me by another consideration, which you may reasonably blame, as it shews too fond an attachment to those things which we ought to resign to the Great Giver; but while she was under my care, I thought a kind of intercourse subsisted between me and a most dear and valuable friend whom I lost this time five years. Whatever I did for her, I thought done for that friend, on whom my affections, hopes, and pride, were placed: but alas! what are affections, hopes, and pride, founded on any mortal

subject? *Oh death, all eloquent!* that can confute all arguments of hope, dependence, and every affection our nature is most prompt to! Pardon me for having said so much on subjects that relate merely to myself, but I know you are not only sorry for my affliction, but for the want of submission and resignation that may have appeared in it, and also for my not having present to my mind the consolations to be found in the great truths you have so constantly set before me, and enabled me to see; but indeed I hope that some part of my dejection was owing to a kind of seizure that came too quick upon me to be opposed by thought. I have spent my hours in application to the book of consolation; but that truly heavenly temper, which in others is a momentary effort, is in you become a habit. So fixed and settled are you, and so "well principled in virtue's book," you can never on the most sudden occasion, fall into confusion and error. May you ever enjoy without a cloud, "the soul's calm sunshine," and win by example, as

well as convince by argument! I am pleased with the track your son has fallen into at Oxford; a course of reading and conversation with men of learning and solidity will direct that vivacity which is an advantage, if well employed, if not, it is nothing. I sent him Rollin's History, which I fancy he will like better than the Universal History. Some knowledge of ancient history is necessary, a very exact or enlarged one, perhaps, not so. Voltaire, and Lord Bolinbroke, historians of later ages, speak with much contempt of ancient history, and certainly if they mean that it does not give a knowledge of the present state of nations and interests of Europe, they are very much in the right, but to attain a true knowledge of human nature, what can be better than to study the unsophisticated man of ruder ages?

When we consider what discoveries in philosophy have been made, how many arts have been improved, how easily by printing each improvement in science is communicated to all nations, and how safely conveyed through ages, we are

tempted to think meanly of the ancients. One might imagine all Newton's light, and Bacon's sense, entering the mind of every attentive reader; that each age should stand on the eminence raised by the former, "till mountains, heaped on mountains, reached the skies;" but alas! we know by experience it is otherwise. Great improvements are made by the extraordinary portion of intellectual gifts in individuals, not the inheritance and succession of ages. From Archimedes to Sir Isaac Newton, what a chasm! The only great and perfect in art or science, are the self taught. A man of lively and agreeable imagination has suggested many pretty arguments why a blind stroller should write the best epic poem;* he might as well have accounted for his stature, or the colour of his hair: it was owing to certain properties of the individual man called Homer. Could he tell us why the supple courtier of Augustus, and humble companion of his minister, should be the best satirist? There are

* Blackwell's life of Homer.

genius's superior to all impediments, and some who have made to themselves times and occasions, and have risen to the utmost degree of human perfection among the rude and the illiterate; and is it not worth a person's attention to examine these great and original characters? But in these ancient histories there is a mixture of fable, and in modern history, of lyes. A fable may show something of the genius or customs of the people; a party lye does not. The account you give me of a certain lady gives me much pleasure; for the sake of some very amiable and respectable persons, I wish her conduct may be such as may contribute to their honour, and happiness; I wish her to be right for her own sake. I have not great malice against those who, knowing, misrepresent me, less still to such as not knowing, mistake me. It is said by some writer who honoured women (and perhaps geese) less than they deserve, that few women have the virtues of an honest man. If it be so, a little of the blame must fall to the share of the men, who are more

easily deluded than persuaded into any compliance. This makes the women have recourse to artifice to gain power, which, as they have gained by the weakness or caprice of those they govern, they are afraid to lose by the same kind of arts, addressed to the same kind of qualities; and the flattery bestowed by the men on all the fair from 15, makes them so greedy of praise, that they most excessively hate, detest, and revile every quality in another woman which they think can obtain it. I shall give Mrs. Donnellan the pleasure of knowing the civil reception my cousin found at the Bishop of Cloyne's; I did not doubt of his lordship's shewing respect to your son, for though he wears lawn and petticoats, he cannot be angry at merit superior to his own, or jealous of that which is equal to it.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

The 13th of January, 1753.

My most excellent Cousin,

Mr. Isaac will do my letters most unmerited honour if he considers them as news-papers. Fame's mighty trumpet has no notes loud enough to reach my ears at Sandleford, nor of the lies she whispers, or of the truths she bawls, can I hear or repeat one syllable. Most things misunderstood, are misapplied, but the destination of my epistles to the service of the cook, to singe a fowl, or guard the bottom of a minced pye, was a judgment worthy of the wisdom and justice of a Minos or Rhadamanthus. I am much obliged to your amiable brother and Mrs. Temple West for their kind concern for my health; the good wishes of those one esteems, are almost equal to the blessings they desire for one. I am extremely glad that your manner of being

in town will be such as will render yours and Mrs. West's residence there agreeable to you both. Good humour and good order seem to regulate the family you are to be in; together they make an excellent menage: I cannot think they will in such manner preside at the feast of those very discreet virgins, Mademoiselles Lant and Torriano. How came they to think of so jolly a matter as a feast? I think I see them marching round the porridge pot, and singing,

> Double, double, toil and trouble,
> Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

I am very glad Lord Temple is out of danger; his good humour, cheerfulness, and his civility to your son, have recommended him much to me. I am sorry that Mr. Pitt is not in good health. I know it will give you great concern; however, consider the care, skill, and exactness with which nature has fitted up his head, and pardon her for some little neglects in the finishing his stomach: ample amends has been made to him for some

want of bodily health. Consider how much worse is the lot of such who have the same infirmities of body without the extraordinary gifts of the mind. Then indeed, cousin, they are grievous, but one is used to bear them, and patience becomes a habit where suffering is so. I hope Mr. Pitt will next season try the Tunbridge waters; they succeed sometimes when the Bath fails. Pray in your next, let me know what account you have heard of Mrs. Anne Pitt, who, I fear, is in very bad health. I suppose Mr. Pitt has exercised his magic on your garden: let me know how he liked your Gothic seat. When such persons as Sir George Lyttelton and Mr. West pass a week together, one may imagine the time is not spent in mere unprofitable talk; by some things Sir George said to me, I imagined you would together apply to the finishing of a work of which I have heard you speak. You said something when I was at Wickham, of a discourse on miracles: I do not doubt of your treating any subject with a peculiar happiness, but of all

subjects, it is the most nice in a philosophical and sceptical age. Arguments of equal credibility are not always equally believed. The regular process observed by nature in her ordinary productions, and the causes of many extraordinary appearances being now discovered, the philosophers are averse to a belief of miracles. An experience that many things formerly considered as such, were but in the ordinary course, and regular effects of certain powers and qualities, and frequent detection of imposture and fraud in those who pretended to miraculous powers, have together rendered men's minds more averse to that subject, and less open to the conviction of such proofs, so that they raise up both physical and moral objections to such arguments. Excuse me therefore if I say, they are of all the evidences of the Christian religion, what are at present least likely to meet with a candid reception. You did not mention any thing more than barely that the miracles were the subject of your writing; excuse me, therefore, for what I have

said, and believe my concern arises from the most tender and zealous regard to the cause, and its advocate. I should be sorry to see the peace of a good man disturbed, and the pen of a wise one engaged in the impertinent and unprofitable sophistry of controversial writings; indeed there are many prating, but few writing, free thinkers; however, there are always some who can cavil and dispute. I do not mean that I would not wish you to employ your talents in so noble a cause as that of religion, but I would wish them so engaged, as would be most likely to do good to others, and not occasion you any trouble. Our Saviour himself did not urge those truths which he thought his disciples at that season not prepared to receive. I have lately read Mr. Locke's discourse on miracles, and I think, from his very definition of them, it is a difficult subject to write on in such a manner as to give any new light, or higher probability than they carry to every reader, from the account as you have it in the New Testament. I am at present reading

Dr. Clark's evidences of natural and revealed religion, which I think a most incomparable work. I know not what offence might be taken by churchmen, at his disagreement with some orthodox opinions, but as a Christian queen, I should have thought he deserved the Archbishoprick of Canterbury, and all the honours and rewards that it was possible for him to enjoy. One cannot help grieving he had not his reward in this world, but one rejoices to know he cannot have missed it in another. I have heard that the queen had a mind to have preferred him to the highest dignitaries of the church, but his brethren opposed it. I should be sorry to believe that a man who so well demonstrated the being of a god, and set forth the truths of the gospel, and enforced the moral obligations by every argument, should have been thought deficient in good doctrine. I cannot help thinking I have just run into two great absurdities, one in supposing you could want advice, another in imagining I was fit to give it you: the first,

I can hardly imagine, the second much less, but where one is much interested for a person's happiness, and credit, and I hope you do not doubt my being so for yours, one is too much alarm'd to be wise: forgive me therefore for the sake of the motive. I know you are the person in the world who would be least sensible of the presumption of my advising Mr. West.

I did not understand your charitable and kind admonitions in my affliction, as censures, any farther than as you must always blame what is wrong in itself. Your arguments of consolation are the best that can be used, and I have often read them, and shall keep them in my memory, and also in my cabinet, that if, in the short period of my remaining life, there should new afflictions befall me, I may have timely recourse to them. I thank God most of my friends are more likely by the superior strength of their constitutions to survive than to depart before me; indeed I cannot say so of my poor Lydia, for whom I live in daily anxiety. I have not heard from her this

week, but I hope her silence is rather owing to Dr. Shaw's prohibition of writing than to any extraordinary indisposition; the last account she gave of herself, was a good one.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, 21st January, 1753.

My most honoured Cousin,

I AM much obliged to you for your letter, and the good wish at the end of it, which according to Mr. Locke, I may understand to imply no less than that I may neither be sick nor be mad; I will promise you never to be the first by intemperance, nor the second by pride and impatience; so far is right, the rest we leave to Heaven. I cannot think that you have lately studied the map of England, otherwise you would not consider Sandleford as a place so remote; it is certain that it is not so

near London as Wickham is, and that we cannot receive so frequent visits from those we like, nor so short ones from persons we do not. The rules of civility and hospitality regulate our intercourse with our neighbours, rather than choice. As to our fireside, it is under the protection of that serious goddess of dullness, who passes in all the country firesides in England, for the true Minerva, though in truth she does rather resemble her owl; however, the place may reasonably please any person who is fond of retirement, and does not affect appearing in the *beau-monde*. For my part, I cannot agree with you, in such contempt of that pretty monster the beau-monde, but I know no better proof of that health of the mind you wish me, than the preferring what I ought, to what I like, to do; and indeed I had a free choice, and it has been offer'd to me to return to London whenever I pleased. Did I but know the abode of rosy health, I would repair thither. I have diligently sought the charming goddess, but she flies from my pursuit, and I must content

myself with the society of her best substitute, patience. I approve much of Mrs. West's metamorphosis of London nymphs into those weeds called love and idleness. Ovid himself could not have done better for them, but still I hope you will both leave so much of your wisdom at Wickham, as would be inconvenient in town. I think there is but one way by which you can either of you avoid pleasing in any society, and that is by not being pleased in it; that I own to be an infallible method. If Mrs. West was to be obliged to appear with pompons in her cap, and your worship under like necessity to wear a toupet, I should pity you both, but good sense and merit are agreeable to all modes, and take well in every soil and climate, though people are apt to imagine that they belong only to that region in which they happen to live. I believe seven years residence in London would confirm one in an opinion that no humane arts or conversation reach beyond Knightsbridge. The same number of idle summers and dull winters pass'd in the country would

make one pronounce every thing in town to be idle, frivolous, and vain. One ought not to contract a local character: it imposes on no one but ones self, however happily united with the place it never passes for a perfect and complete one. It may be difficult for the vain and the gay to find their proper pleasures in the country, but I know no talents or virtues that may not find employment and gratifications in a great city. The beau-monde will pay you respect for not imitating their follies, a compliment with which they reward the complaisance of their own set only when they excel in the arts they profess. Philosophic pride treads the stage with more comic effect than social complacency. The first or second of February I shall return to London without the least concern about the figure I shall make there, most happily trusting that I shall not make any figure at all. Naturalists have taken pains to class the different kinds of plants and animals, but moralists have left three parts of mankind without any particular character, and they are at

liberty to add themselves to a gay assembly, a philosophical lecture, be present at a reasonable conversation, or go with the crowd to see Harlequin in a bottle. Happy the animal that can live in all elements, though it dignifies, or is dignified by none! When Mr. Garrick is walking on tip-toe on the stage, raising his voice to the highest key, yet still observing its harmony, studying the grace of every attitude and propriety of every gesture, is he, though the object of admiration, half as happy as the unheeded spectator, who sits lolling on his elbows in the pit? but this, like some other salutary truths, is hid from the mighty and the wise, and revealed to the weak and the simple; else would there have been no Garricks, nor the heroes they represent, neither the catastrophe nor dramatic poem, nor tragedian, nor any thing of "what in any "age ennobled hath the buskin'd stage," or filled the theatre of the world with rumor. I could wish Mr. Pitt some of this happy insignificancy I have been boasting of, that he might pass this winter in a warmer

climate. The rigours of this winter are insupportable. My little cousin's behaviour at Oxford must please you extremely, and with a heart that truly sympathises in all your sentiments, I congratulate you upon it. I suppose he has received Rollin's history, which I sent before I left London. I did not presume to give my advice, or perhaps I should have recommended Sir Walter Raleigh's history, rather than Rollin's: they are both addicted to making reflections, but there is great difference in the judgment of an experienced chief and statesman on the affairs of war or policy, and those made by a speculative scavant, who writes by his fireside. I am sorry your son has so soon lost his friend, the Bishop of Cloyne.* I had just been reading some of his pieces lately published, when I took up the newspapers that mentioned his death; such an event is apt to make one consider what people have done in their lives as an insubstantial vision, but the works I had been reading of his are of that incorruptible nature that is laid up in heaven.

* Dr. Berkeley.

My poor Lydia, thank God, is better, and the babes are getting quite well. You speak of having been visited by the gout, which I am sorry to hear, and may health and all the articles of which happiness is composed, attend you. However indifferently I may esteem my letters at the time I am writing them, I value them highly when they procure me one from you. I am rather better than I was, but not in pride of health or gayety of spirits.

I am
my inestimable Cousin's
most faithful, most affectionate friend,
and obliged humble servant,
ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Montagu, from Gilbert West, Esq.

Tunbridge Wells, 27th May, 1753.

My dearest Cousin! my best and most valuable Friend,

YOUR kind letter, which I received upon my coming from chapel, is the most

agreeable thing I have met with at Tunbridge, where we arrived last night about seven. It came very seasonably to relieve my spirits, which are much sunk, by the extreme dejection which appears to day in Mr. Pitt, from a night passed entirely without sleep, notwithstanding all the precautions which were taken within doors to make it still and quiet, and the accidental tranquillity, arising from the present emptiness and desolation of this place, to which no other invalids besides ourselves are yet arrived, or even expected to arrive, as yet. He began to drink the waters to day, but as they are sometimes very slow in their operations, I much fear both he, and those friends who cannot help sympathising with him, will suffer a great deal, before the wished for effect will take place; for this *insomnium*, his physicians have prescribed opiates, a medicine, which in this case, though they may procure a temporary ease, yet often recoil upon the spirits. I think his physicians have been to blame in giving all their attention to the disorder in his

bowels, and not sufficiently regarding the distemperature of his spirits, a disease, much more to be apprehended than the other; while he continues under this oppression, I am afraid it will be impossible for me to leave him, as he fancies me of the utmost use to him, as a friend and a comforter; but I hope in God he will soon find some alteration for the better, of which I shall be glad to give you the earliest information. In the mean time, I beg you will take care of your health, and as the most effectual means of establishing it, I most earnestly desire you will follow Mr. Montagu's exhortations to repair forthwith to Tunbridge; as by so doing, you will not only contribute to the regaining your own health and spirits, but to the comfort and felicity of some here, who love and admire you much; especially one, who values himself much upon the title of your friend, and merits it equally by the great esteem and affection which he has for you. Mr. Pitt expressed a due sense of your goodness in inquiring so particularly after him;

and that you may know how high you stand in his opinion, I must inform you, that in a conversation with Molly, he pronounced you the most *perfect woman* he ever met with. I am with the utmost sincerity and the highest regard, my dearest Cousin's

most affectionate friend,
and obliged humble servant,
GIL. WEST.

To her Husband.

The 8th, 1753.

MY DEAREST,

I AM much obliged to you for your letter from Doncaster, as it has allayed my fears on account of the hazards of a journey, to find you have performed so much of it happily. I reckon with impatience every day of absence from so dear and good a friend; nothing could keep me in tolerable humour during this separation, but the daily progress I make towards better

health; the only blessing I want, and which, though you cannot absolutely bestow it on me, yet you furnish me with means and opportunity of gaining it. It has been much the turn of the society I am in, to go out in parties to see places, and last post day we resolved upon an expedition of this sort, with such precipitation, I had not opportunity to write without keeping all the company waiting. We went to see an old seat of a Mr. Brown's; it is well situated, was built by Inigo Jones, has some fine portraits, none of which delighted me so much, as one by a great hand, of an old woman of above fourscore, great, great grandam to the present possessor: the health and vivacity of the complexion, and the happy serenity of the countenance, expressing the gay conscience of a life well spent, were highly pleasing: her grandson, painted by Vandyck, is in the same piece; he has the amiable grace of infancy, and a countenance void of care, as is usual to children; but it does not express the heart-felt joy, the sober certainty of

waking bliss, which is signified in the old lady's, who, I find, is held in veneration by her descendants. The house is furnished with the good woman's work; I dare say her pleasures were all of the domestic kind, her dairy and poultry her care, her garden her amusement; perhaps to know no more, is woman's highest honour and her praise, and more in our proper character than the cabal and intrigue of state, in which the French ladies place their happiness and glory. We went from this venerable seat, to a place called New Vauxhall, where Mr. Pitt had provided us a good dinner; the view from it is romantic; we staid there till the cool of the evening, and then returned home. We drank tea yesterday in the most beautiful rural scene that can be imagined, which Mr. Pitt had discovered in his morning's ride, about half a mile from hence; he ordered a tent to be pitched, tea to be prepared, and his French horn to breathe music like the unseen genius of the wood. The company dined with me; and we set out, number

eight. After tea we rambled about for an hour, seeing several views, some wild as Salvator Rosa, others placid, and with the setting sun, worthy of Claude Lorrain. These parties are good for health and pleasure, and break the dull line of a Tunbridge life. Sir George Lyttelton and Mr. Bowers are come to spend a few days with Mr. Pitt.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

June the 13th, 1753.

MY DEAREST,

I CAN with pleasure assure you, the waters have hitherto done as well as I could wish, my cough is much abated, and my appetite increased; this return of health will give me double pleasure, as I know it will add to your happiness. I have a constant invitation to dinner at the white stone house; Mr. Pitt is too ill to dine

abroad, and the Wests cannot leave him; so, as often as I am disposed for company, I dine there; the rest of my time passes in taking air and exercise, and now and then the relief of a book. I have chiefly applied myself to Davila's History of the Civil Wars of France; his language is clear, majestic, and noble, his reflections are fine, and the characters drawn in a masterly manner; he is reckoned a partial historian, too favourable to Catherine de Medicis, his country woman, and too much prejudiced against the Huguenots; certainly it is almost impossible to find an impartial and knowing historian. Such only can speak with any certainty of councils, who have been privy to them, and of actions, who have been present at them, and from persons thus engaged, can one expect impartiality? The monk in his cell, and the student in his college, may be impartial, but they are unknowing too. The good that happens in this world, is oftener brought about by the balance of vices, than operation of virtues, and thus the vanity of the historian is a check to

his other passions, he must give a pretty faithful account, or he will fall into disesteem, and he must betray the councils, to shew his intimate acquaintance with them. Sully does not discover so much of Catherine's dissimulation as Davila; one, indeed, calls that prudence, which the other terms base hypocrisy. But one does not want the historian to fix the term, one can do that for ones self. Every page of Davila is big with events; the mind has no time to languish, one is rather hurried from one great event to another; as soon as that infant warrior, that Mars in swathing clothes, (as Shakspeare calls Hotspur,) Henry of Navarre comes forth, one is awake and attentive wherever he appears, knowing how great a figure he will make in his maturer age. As a woman too, I have some pleasure in observing, that Henry the IVth seems to have owed his native fire, and the improvement of it, to his mother; she had not the satisfaction of seeing him placed on the throne of France, which would have given great pleasure to her ambitious spirit;

but she was so fierce an Huguenot, I know not whether she would have approved the means he took to get into quiet possession of it. However, she died before the massacre of St. Bartholomew, perhaps by the contrivance of the same spirit which brought about that horrid night, the blackest perhaps in the annals of time. I am under concern that you have not heard from me, as you may be alarmed about my health, which indeed has been uninterrupted, and such, that when I consider the poor condition in which I came hither, it amazes me. I thought myself gently sinking into the grave, distant perhaps, a year or two; but apparently on my journey thither, so much were my spirits and strength decayed, and, as Samson describes his case, nature in all her functions weary of herself; but I sleep and eat heartily, have great vigour of spirits, and really seem to myself, as if some magic operation had been wrought upon me; and I find my disorder has been all a mere nervous mimickry of disease. I cannot say but it counterfeited well,

but I do not design to be imposed upon, so as to give such faith to it as I did before I came hither this year. May health and happiness attend on all your footsteps! such are my hourly wishes.

I am, my Dearest,

Your most faithful
and affectionate wife,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

1753.

My Dearest,

I HAVE more thanks to return to you for your kind and generous attention to my health, than I can express. I am drinking the waters with all diligence, and they agree perfectly. Mr. Pitt, Mr. West, and his son, and Miss West, and the Dean of Exeter,* are going a tour to Maidstone, Canterbury, and Dover; they design to

* Dr. Lyttelton, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle.

see all the seats, parks, castles on the sea side, and other things worthy of notice: Mr. Pitt thinks the waters more beneficial after these intermissions, but as this place is dull, he gives his days of leisure to the amusement of seeing places. I expect a very exact account of the things they have seen: Mr. Pitt has a correct taste, Mr. West a poetical imagination, and the Dean a love of antiquities, so amongst them one may learn the particulars of all the places they have visited. So various are the minds of men that the same object does not exist in the same manner in any two heads; so it is of faces, all see the same features, but our opinions of the countenance are different. As the world is furnished with variety, and life made up of it, I know not whether those persons who have some tincture of, and a little acquaintance with, all kinds of knowledge have not more pleasure than such as confine themselves to one branch, though certainly man's life and powers are so limited, a person cannot be master of more than one art or science; even paint-

ing or music have more in them than the life of man can exhaust. However, this is a question that will bear much argument, for though Providence, to excite man to the pursuit of knowledge, has strew'd pleasures like flowers on the surface; delight and sure satisfaction, like the ore and gem, are buried in the mine, and can thence be brought only by labour, time, and strong application.

All the family at the Stone-house, and myself in their train, went yesterday to Penshurst, and spent a good deal of time in viewing the pictures. I was most pleased with the portraits, as I know not any family that for arts and arms, greatness of courage, and nobility of mind, have excelled the Sidney race. Beauty too has been remarkable in it; they have adorned the Historian's and the Poet's page, but alas, all things change, and I fear that for the future, their highest renown will arise from some paragraph in the news-paper, that bestows on them beauty, wit, and fine accomplishments. We drove about the Park for some time,

admired the fine scenes, and revered the shades where Sir Philip, and Algernon Sidney had pursued their meditations, and Waller touched his gentle lyre. We went from the Park to an inn at Penshurst to dinner, and returned home in the evening.

I am, my dearest,
Your most truly affectionate,
and faithful Wife,
E. M.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, 27th September, 1753.

My most honoured Cousin.

YOUR kind and agreeable letter restored me in some measure to the temper I lost at going out of town the very day you came to it. I know not what poets may find in the country when they have filled the woods with sylvan deities, and the

rivers with naiades; but to me, groves, and streams, and plains, make poor amends for the loss of a friend's conversation. You have better supplied Mr. Pitt's absence by reading the orations of his predecessor, Demosthenes, and I can easily imagine you would rather have passed the evening with the British, than the Grecian Demosthenes, whom in talents, perhaps, he equals, and in grace of manners and the sweet civilities of life, I dare say, excels. But when you seem to say you would even have preferred the simple small-talk of your poor Cousin to the Athenian orator, I cry out, Oh, wonderous power of friendship! which, like the sun, gives glorious colours to a vapour, and brightens the pebble to a gem, till what would have been neglected by the common herd, is accepted by the most distinguished; thus has your partiality done by me, and having made me your companion and your friend, you at last begin to think I have a right to be so, and as I am in danger of thinking so too, I beg of you not to change your opinion after I

have adopted it. On Tuesday morning about eight o'clock, I call'd upon Mr. Hooke at his hermitage; I found him, like a true savant, surrounded by all the elements of science, but though I looked round the room, I could not perceive any signs of the author, no papers, pen, ink, or sheets just come from the press. I fear the fine ladies and fine prospects of Cookham divert his attention from the Roman History. I desired him to carry me to Mrs. Edwin's, which I heard was a very pretty place, and indeed I do not wonder if the Thames, which plays so prettily round the garden, should make Mr. Hooke forget the Tiber; and there is an old ferry woman, who crosses the Thames very often before Mrs. Edwin's terrace, whom, from acquaintance and friendship, he may prefer to the valiant Clelia, long so famed in story, as you do the impertinent *caquet* of your cousin to the rhetoric of former times; such advantage have present objects, and happy it is so, or the majesty of the antique world might awe the spirits of the puny modern,

and action be lost in contemplation. Mr. Hooke made earnest enquiry after you, and I said for you to him, what I thought equivalent to the regard he expressed for you. While we were in Mrs. Edwin's garden, he betrayed my name to her; my face was well disguised with a pair of spectacles, but on his information, she came down, shew'd me her house, and the pictures, which are very fine, but the views from her windows gave one no leisure to consider the works of art. I shall not endeavour to describe the place to you, as I understand you were there last year to visit Mrs. Stanley, who lives at the edge of the garden. I know not whether the freshness of the morning, a small degree of mistiness in the air, which soften'd the near objects, and the sun obliquely falling upon parts of the wood, did not give it at that time a more than ordinary beauty; but I must own I was never so pleased with any situation on the Thames, its banks being usually flat and naked; these are finely wooded, and rise in variety of eminences. Cliefden Hill

rises majestically in view, and the only flat shore you see from this place, lies straight before it, and is a large plain of the finest verdure, and full of cattle. Many little islands diversify the scene, and the boats continually passing, give life to the picture. This gentle sort of navigation does not take off from the pastoral air of the place; stately vessels are noble objects, but with Bellona's thunder in their sides, they destroy the peace and simplicity of a scene. I will own that the river here, does not appear in such force and magnificence as near Greenwich, but where it gently glides through humble vallies, or fertilizes a little plain, it still keeps a character of nobility. Father Thames in a little valley, has the dignity of a great chief and statesman in retreat: we remember the invincible fleets he has sent forth, the commercial benefits he has procured to his country, the useful arts he has assisted, and the advantageous alliances he has made, uniting his city with every land from whence it can acquire benefit. I need not tell you that I

often wish myself on Mount Ephraim; but as there is pain in fruitless wishes, and my ignoble soul is much afraid of pain, I endeavour to convert all memory of the past into a pleasing thankfulness for happiness enjoyed; but though, as Dr. Middleton was my godfather, you may suppose I have read his Evangelist with great veneration, I cannot find much solid comfort in a doctrine without promise. The remembrance of a well spent life, were all to cease here, is indeed a satisfaction; the pride of a stoic may blow it up very high, especially when he has added the immortality of a name, and while he considers the perishable state of his own nature can proudly add,

> But fame with golden wings aloft doth fly,
> Above the reach of ruinous decay,
> And with brave plumes doth beat the azure sky,
> Admir'd by base born men from far away.

Such are the comforts of the budge doctors of the stoic fur, but what are they to a lady in a blonde cap? I am looking forward to future summers, and when

most serious, to the eternal summer. I have been very well ever since I saw you, I have spent most of my time in walking and airing; a few hours for reading I have in my power, though my fair disciples hinder me a good deal;* they have been stunning me ever since I sat down, with the achievements of the boisterous Semiramis, and the effeminate delicacy of Sardanapalus; had he kept on the helmet, and her ladyship set to the distaff, much trouble had been saved to M. Rollin, the misses, and your humble servant, and you would have had a more intelligible letter. You know I have your permission to trouble you with long letters, a dangerous license to one whom want of thought, does not reduce to silence, but every line I write must be considered as an *eloge* of your patience and condescension; having so long dwelt on your virtues, I will now remember your talents, and detain you no longer from such employ-

* Mrs. Montagu had the daughters of her deceased friend, Mrs. Botham, with her.

ments as they will naturally lead you to, and you will pardon all my impertinence for the respect and affection with which

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 4th of October, 1753.

My most honoured Cousin,

I FOUND your letter on my table last night, at my return from a sober airing on the neighbouring commons. I have kept up our Tunbridge custom, of going out for an hour or two in the afternoon, and by that means I make the hours of idleness a time of amusement, which is not always to be accomplished where one has not change of company. I know not whether I am not more fond of this custom, as it seems to bring me in some measure back to the agreeable life of Mount

Ephraim. Happy should I be, if I could as easily renew all that was improving and delightful to the mind in those airings, as I can pursue what they had of healthful to the body and pleasant to the eye! Dr. Young says, wisdom grows on all plants, and in every rill a pure instruction flows, but there wants a certain chymical art and skill to extract this sapient virtue, and I find I can get it only by the liberality of those who charitably dispense it to the poor; you may easily believe, therefore, how much I regret the rich and charitable corporation into which I was long admitted; such were the turn of my thoughts and tune of my disposition, when I found your letter ready to make up for all that had been deficient in my airing; imagine then the welcome I gave to it. In my solitary musings in the coach, I had sometimes cast an eye of envy on the humble cottage, which to the beholders, if not to the inhabitants, shews the sweet aspect of content. We are apt to think their wishes have as narrow limits as their possessions, and their tem-

pers are as uniform as their way of life; that tranquillity must reside in minds that have never been agitated by hope or fear, awakened by solicitous cares, or refined by delicacy; which last, is most perhaps, the enemy of human happiness. A delicate person, like a sickly traveller on an inconstant sea, suffers equally from too brisk or too languid a gale, must have fair weather, sunshine, prosperous winds and favourable tides to make the voyage pleasant; while insensibility bears every change with equanimity, unruffled in the most boisterous storm, unwearied in the deadest calm. Thus in the wanderings of imagination, had I run over all the advantages of rustic stupidity, but when your letter presented to me pleasures which can arise only from delicacy of taste and a well awakened sensibility; I changed my opinion, envied neither shepherd nor shepherdess, but giving due preference to the pleasures of reason and taste, I sat down by my fireside with more than calm content, with real delight and satisfaction. The poor cottagers, who,

perhaps as erroneously ascribe happiness to wealth, as we may peace to poverty, had probably envied me the ease and indolence I enjoyed in the coach, and little imagined I should receive much greater pleasure at my return, from a single sheet of paper, than I had done in an equipage, which to them, must appear a piece of pomp and luxury; so little can we judge of untasted pleasures and unexperienced sensations! and so often do we mistake the object, when we envy! I am much obliged to Mr. Cheere for his regard to me, and he applies it as I could wish, when he employs it in your service. I cannot at all suspect that he designed this adorned and high finished piece, as an emblem of your cousin; if it should resemble her, a very few winters, some cold blasts, and rough winds, will efface whatever it had originally of beauty, and you must do for it, as I have long done for myself; consider whether it can be made useful and serve some domestic purposes, when it is no longer an ornament to shew abroad. This consideration of a quondam

belle, has made me a school-mistress, which office I find you highly respect, since you are so afraid to interrupt its attentions; but know, my good Cousin, that a correspondence with you can never hurt that great republic, my school, which if I would adorn with manners, and amend with rules, it must be by such as I borrow from you, for of you I must learn what I should teach. I honour and admire the wandering spirit with which your are possessed; if Mrs. West takes to gadding, I shall believe the story of Will o' the wisp. Mr. Pope mentions a sort of people who build houses from whence to run away, sure he could not mean any of my friends! I suppose that before you laid the plan of a month's absence from Wickham, you knew Mr. Pitt would stay so long at the Bath: his departure was so sudden, perhaps you had not settled with Mr. Lyttelton, how often you should receive accounts of his health. Pray when you have any news of him, let me know how the Bath waters agree with him. I often regret that the Tunbridge waters

did not prove as serviceable to him as they have been to me: may the Bath restore him to perfect health for his own sake, that of his friends, and the public. You know my respects always attend my Lord Bishop and Mrs. Sherlock, and Miss Chester.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Saturday, the 13th of October, 1753.

My most honoured Cousin,

YOUR letter met me last night at my return from airing. I had been gliding about the commons by the pale light of the silent moon, conversing with the spirits of my absent friends whom I hoped were all in health, and engaged in scenes more gay than woods, hills, and vallies veil'd in night, or faintly illuminated by a weak and trembling ray. My moonlight

excursions prove that love of dull tranquillity which you despise me for, but I assure you they are very pleasant to me, who am seldom displeased when impertinent or disagreeable objects do not intrude. My mind, like a healthful climate, breeds no plagues; if any come there, they must be imported: I love to see the night gathering all nature's children under its wing; the very zephyrs seem to respect the universal peace and rest, and all things whisper tranquillity, and I am glad to catch the tone. After my airings, I drink tea, then retire to my dressing room for two or three hours with companions, whom superior parts and noble ambition led from the silent path of life to its busiest and most turbulent scenes; if I can get some of their experience without any of their dangers, and a little of their knowledge without any of their passions, I may keep my tranquillity without falling into that stupidity and insensibility which I think still more unworthy of the human mind than vain solicitude, and idle perturbation. I know it is

the custom to answer all letters by the gross, without condescending to take notice of any enquiry or question, so I will, in most glaring capitals, that it may not again be unanswered, desire TO KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD CONCERNING MR. PITT'S HEALTH; you certainly must have heard of him, and I think, you know a good account of him would be very welcome, so I am apprehensive he is not so well as I could wish, but I shall be very glad to part with an unpleasing error; if it be an error, pray contradict me. Mr. Botham and his pretty little boy are here. You will probably receive a letter I sent to Lillingstone; however, should it be lost, you need not repine at it, as you may have as many as you please out of the same mint, so plenty are all things which bear no value. My best, sincerest, and continual wishes ever attend you. I am,

my most honoured Cousin,
your much obliged and most affectionate
and faithful,
ELIZA MONTAGU.

To the Same.

the 25th.

My honoured Cousin,

You grow so adventurous and bold in taking journeys, that I begin to apprehend you would step into the rapid car of Phœbus if it was offer'd you, " gallop " apace the fiery-footed steeds" and travel round the globe in four and twenty hours. Sedentary, solitary, lazy and dull, how unworthy am I of your correspondence! Let my way of life be some excuse for me; remember there is more of vigor, strength, and skill required to dance on the slack, than the tight rope. Descartes, to overcome the vis inertiæ, and keep the planet rolling in its sphere, was forced to whirl it in a vortex. I am not carried about by the current of the world, but left on a desert shore, where my mind rests in absolute dulness. You must expect nothing from me but to have the gold you send me changed into silver; increased indeed in weight and bulk, but debased in purity

and worth. I do not find that even the scenes of Bulstrode, though they bring back to my mind the chearful days of youth, bring back the vivacity of that happy season. I believe the menagerie at Bulstrode is exceedingly well worth seeing, for the Dutchess of Portland is as eager in collecting animals, as if she foresaw another deluge, and was assembling every creature after its kind, to preserve the species: she used to be very happy in a great variety of fowls, which is a very fortunate taste, for any one who is much in the country, for they have nothing to do, but to throw down a handful of corn, and cry, biddy, biddy, and behold their friends assemble round them in an instant! while I, who care for none of the winged race, but your Theban swan, walk alone, musing on absent friends, and pleasures past and gone. As to the persons and places you mention, though, perhaps improved since I saw them, I think they cannot have any extraordinary beauty. Nature must furnish her quota, to make persons or places great and elegant. The

elegant spectator of forms, will prefer the fair shepherdess with a garland of roses on her head, to the homely royal dame with her diadem of gold. I think you will prefer Mrs. Edwin's little territory, to all the pomp of ———. I am glad you propose to call again on Mr. Hooke. I desire that you will give me an account of all your pleasures, as I take a part in them, and I am willing to accompany you in all your travels. I suppose you have been at Stowe, where Art has exhausted all her powers,

> E quel, che il bello, o il caro accresce all' opre
> L' arte, che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.

Such, I am told, is its present state; when I saw the gardens they brought not so much to one's imagination the scenes of paradise, as of that garden, "where the sapient king with his fair spouse held dalliance;" it was rather a retreat for the proud and luxurious, than the philosophic mind; like the poets, it was an Elysian only for heroes; ambition found examples there, and restless emulation fair incite-

ments, but no quiet scenes hushed the passions into peace, and excluded the visions of this world's vanities; which, I take to be the great benefit of rural retreat, which should give the mind into the guardian care, of "the cherub Contemplation." I am afraid that Mr. Bowers will lose all the pleasure he had promised himself from the neighbourhood of Wickham; he speaks with great regret of your leaving Wickham, and of having seen so little of you, when you was there. I have had the pleasure of receiving several letters from him; he is a charming correspondent, which, added to being a good companion when present, makes him a very desirable friend. Mr. Botham leaves us tomorrow, but he is to leave his little boy with me, as a pledge of his return. I am greatly delighted with the little gentleman; he has the happiest disposition I ever saw, a mind and body disposed to health, and in neither any ill humours. Sometimes, when he bestows a great many of his little endearments and caresses on me, he brings to my mind his fond

mother, who would have received them with infinite delight, but Heaven knew best.—I consider these little creatures as messengers she sends to me, to keep up the intercourse of friendship, till we meet to part no more.

I am,
my dearest Cousin's
most faithful, and affectionate friend,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 3d of September.

I AM much obliged to my dear cousin, for his kind and agreeable letter, which gave me a higher pleasure and more intense delight, than those rural objects which employed my attention in my walks, or filled the magic lantern of my mind, in those noonday dreams, you suppose to have amused me. You are mistaken, when you imagine I send invitations to

beaux and belles, to fill the vacant apartments of my mind. True indeed, that there may be empty space enough to receive French hoops, and, from the same reason, an echo to repeat French sentiments; but there are few of the fine world whom I should invite into my mind, and fewer still, who are familiar enough there, to come unasked. I make use of these seasons of retirement and leisure, to do like the good housewives, to sweep the rooms, range the little homely furniture in order, and deck them with a little sage and other herbs of grace, as they are called, and then hope the fairies will come and visit them, and not the dull creatures of earth's mould, of whom I have enough when I am in town. But you are a welcome and a frequent guest, because you bring with you those virtues and graces, whose presence I would desire. I am pleased with your praise of Moliere, but not with your application of his Misanthrope. When virtue and wisdom live out of the world, they grow delicate, but it is too severe to call

that moroseness; and, perhaps, they lose something of their purity, when they mix with the crowd, and abate in strength, as they improve in flexibility. There is a limit, and a short one too, beyond which human virtue cannot go; a hair's breadth beyond the line, and it is vice. I am now satisfied of what I had before believed, (as you seem so much to admire the Misanthrope,) that it is far beyond all comedies that ever were written. The character being so entirely kept up, and the error, though every where visible, no where monstrous. The Misanthrope has the same moroseness in his love suit and his law suit; he is as rigid and severe to a bad verse as a bad action, and as strict in a salutation in the street or address in a drawing room, as he would be in his testimony in a court of justice; right in the principle, wrong only in the excess, you cannot hate him when he is unpleasant, nor despise him when he is absurd. When the groundwork of a character is virtuous, whatever fantastic forms or uncouth figures may be wrought upon it, it cannot appear abso-

lutely odious or ridiculous. On the contrary, where the ground is vicious, however prettily adorned or gayly coloured, set it in open day, it will be detestable; of which we have an instance in this play; we hate and despise the lively agreeable coquette, as soon as we discover her, and esteem the rigid unamiable Misanthrope. I think my young cousin can hardly have a better amusement than reading Moliere; from whose delicate wit and nice satirical touch, he will find that not only the worst passions want correction and restraint, but the best regulation. The first prayer I should make, if I had a son, would be that he might be free from vice; the second, that he might be free from absurdity, the least grain of it spoils a whole character, and I do not know any comic author more useful than Moliere, for both these purposes. Our English play writers give some vice or affectation, to all their principal characters. I am very well, and careful of my health; all people are fond of novelty and you know health is such to me, but nothing can more recommend it to me,

than thinking my welfare of consequence to you. Adieu, Cousin! I must put on a great hoop, and go three miles to dinner; how much better was our gipsey life! I believe I shall enter myself of the society at Norwood, the rather tempted to it, as I should be your neighbour. I have not heard from Mrs. Boscawen, but I am glad she had the pleasure of spending some time at Wickham.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill Street, Thursday.

My dearest Cousin,

I CANNOT expect to hear from you while you have such agreeable company with you; I find it is difficult to steal an hour from the embarrassments of society, but it is much more so from the agreeable engagements of friendly intercourse. You are making a full meal at the feast of reason, I am running from house to house, getting the cold scraps of visiting conversation, served up with the indelicacy and indifference of an ordinary, at which no power of the mind does the honours; the particular taste of each guest is not consulted, the solid part of the entertainment is too gross for a delicate taste, and the lighter fare insipid: I passed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, in visiting fine ladies, all of a new and extraordinary turn, but I was not much entertained; each differed from every other person in the

world, but each is at all times like herself, I mean in the tone of conversation; the reverse of Mr. Pope's celebrated dame to whom he gives, " fixed principles with fancy ever new;" a praise that ever appeared to me the highest that could be given to the companion and the friend, but by fine ladies it is reversed. Indeed, Cousin, I do not love fine ladies, but I am to dine with * * * to morrow nothwithstanding; she has a fund of honour and honesty, that make a good ground work of a character; there are indeed some grotesque figures embroidered upon it, that caprice and fashion have wrought there, but time may wear them out, and the skilful hand of a prudent friend may help to do it; and then much will remain that is really good. There are strong characters, which, like strong wines, ferment a great while before they grow clear, but when once the dregs are thrown off they admirably bear the change of seasons, and are found cordial to those that take them. I know you are not inclined to like * * * which perhaps induced me to trouble you

with all this impertinence upon, may I say, an impertinent subject? Pray make my compliments to Mrs. and Miss West, Sir George Lyttelton, and my Cousin.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill Street, Wednesday 16, 1754.

My most inestimable Cousin,

I AM much more satisfied now I find that your indisposition was owing to the rencontre of salt fish, milk, and a strange olio of diet, than when I imagined it was the gout in your stomach. But pity, which sometimes subsides into soft passions, on this occasion warms and hardens into anger. Why, when an invalid, would you be so careless of your diet? However difficult it may be to the strong temper of the budge doctors of the stoic fur, to run mad with discretion,* I assure you

* Insanire certâ ratione modoque. Horace.

it is not impossible to the gentle dame in blonde lace and Paris hoop; I followed the precepts of the très-precieuse Lady Grace, and visited "soberly." I have not been out since Sunday, Mr. Montagu's cold having given me a reason for staying at home, and my indolence would have been glad even of an excuse. I did not see Sir George Lyttelton till yesterday morning, but the account he gave of your health pleased me very much. The good Dean called in the evening, and unfolded to me the horrid tale of the salt-fish and asses milk. Oh, could the milky mother, who is so often insulted, so much despised and oppressed by man, have known his perverseness of appetite would have turned her salutary milk, the effect of prudent and fit diet, into a kind of poison; how would she have animadverted upon the occasion? I dare say she would have made better observations on the different powers of reason and instinct than have been made by any philosopher on two legs. I wish I had her critique upon human reason, in black and white, with her

modest apology for long ears and walking on four legs. I have just received Mr. Bower's third volume of the Popes, with so polite an Italian epistle, as shews he can play what note he pleases on Apollo's harp. I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Berenger on Monday morning, he has been under discipline for his eyes, but his spirits and vivacity are not abated. Pray has Mr. Birch sent you his Queen Elizabeth? I have not seen it, and I know I shall read it with sorrow. A belle passion at threescore is worse than eating salt fish in the gout. I shall hate these collectors of anecdotes if they cure one of that admiration of a great character that arises from a pleasing deception of sight. I desire you not to read aloud this part of Queen Bess's story, when the ass is at your door; it would make a bad chapter for us in her history of human reason, 60 odd to twenty-one! instinct never made such a blunder. An old woman and a young man, a sin against nature, an old queen and a young counsellor, a sin against politics and prudence. "Am-

bition should be made of sterner stuff." I shall begin to believe Madame Scudery's romances, in which Lucretia is adroit at intrigue, the stern Brutus a whining lover, and Cato the censor admirable at writing the billet doux. I cannot forgive Mr. Birch for bringing this story to light in such a manner; I supposed with Shakspeare, that, in spite of Cupid's idle darts, "she pass'd on in maiden meditation fancy free." I should have written to you before if I had not been in hopes Mr. Montagu's cold would have given me some room to flatter myself with a visit to Wickham.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

November the 5th, 1754.

My dear Cousin,

SINCE the days that Cupid set Hercules to the distaff, he has not had a nobler con-

quest, than over the elevated soul of Mr. Pitt. I congratulate you on the affinity, and I hope he will be happy: his long acquaintance with the lady makes the hazard much less, than where people marry without knowing the disposition of the person they choose. I believe Lady Hester Grenville is very good humoured, which is the principal article in the happiness of the marriage state. Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover, wit may be pernicious, and many brilliant qualities troublesome; but a companion of gentle disposition, softens cares and lightens sorrows. These sober matches made on reflection, are often happier than those made by sudden and violent passion, and I hope this will prove of that kind; and there is an authority in the character of Mr. Pitt, that will secure him the deference and obedience of his wife; proud of him abroad, she will be humble to him at home; and having said so much, I will consign them over to Hymen, who I hope will join their hands in the most auspicious hour. I was prevented writing to you by

Sunday's post, Dr. Pococke having staid with us on Saturday night, and the first Sunday of the month I always go to Newbury Church; the length of the service made me return too late to write. I am glad Mr. Cambridge has been at Wickham, though to my detriment, by having delayed your letter; but I think a person of his miscellanous conversation an admirable visitant in the country, where the mind is apt to follow one track. I should be allured by the profession of a conjuror, who promises to shew one things past, present, and to come, a proof, you will say, of my being tainted with the vices of my mother Eve. I will confess my mind does sometimes wander after novelties, and I sit with great delight to listen to Dr. Pococke's account of many things rather strange than fine. We were in Wiltshire last week, to visit Mrs. Medows, and my love of prospects was abundantly gratified, by passing over some of the highest ground in England; but the views, though rich and extensive, were not distinct enough to be very

delightful; the rich and cultivated lands of Berkshire and Hampshire lay beneath the hill, the ground we were upon was barren, bleak, and dreary, and seemed in the disorder in which the deluge had left it; the bright and gentle element of water which enlivens and fertilizes the plains, was no where to be seen, though we looked over a vast tract of land. The hill we passed over had not even a shrub growing upon it, some sheep that seemed to be hanging on the sides, adorned it very much, but there were no farms nor villages at hand, nor any air of habitation. I was glad to leave it to "the crows and choughs that wing the midway air," especially as danger now and then shewed his frightful face, to give greater horror to the situation. The day we returned a fog hid the valley, and the winds raged on the hill, so you may imagine, that I was glad when I regained my quiet habitation. Mr. Botham arrived last night, much we said of you, but should I repeat it, you would retort upon me the words flattery and irony; he is convinced of my health.

now he sees me, but he says, I look like a country Joan, and I must not shew such a jolly countenance at London, lest it should be thought that I am too grossière ever to have been sick or to have had the vapours. When my friendly wishes towards the great city will be brought about, I know not, but if I must be a Joan, I choose to be gossip Joan, for all my friend Mr. Botham: there are wars, and rumours of wars among the politicians, and that may awaken Mr. Montagu's curiosity, and we may go the sooner to hear what is going forward; that is all the part we shall have in it; like my sister idle Joan of happy memory,

> "My billet at the fire is found,
> Whoever is deposed or crown'd."

As Mr. Montagu has recovered his health here, I am determined not to say one syllable concerning London; I know what bitter reproach my mother Eve got, by tempting Adam to taste the fruit that did not agree with him; and, indeed, if he was to grow ill in town, I should reproach

myself. Miss Pitt is in town, and so I have lost all hopes of seeing her here, which is a great mortification to me. I desire you will present my congratulations to Mrs. West, on the alliance Mr. Pitt makes with your family, the friend and the relation will be happily united in him. Adieu, my post-chaise waits.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

The 14th of November.

My dear Cousin,

YOUR lively and agreeable letter bears no mark of the dull and gloomy month of November; I accept your greetings in my Joan-like character, but I make some doubt, whether I shall acquiesce in that of a pedlar; my disdain of it does not arise from pride, but you accuse me of the barbarous ignorance of giving gold

for bits of tin, glass beads, &c. I do not disown my esteem of trifles when they are brilliant cut, but to pay such prices for them as you mention, would only become those who have mines of gold. I am secured from this unequal traffic by my poverty of understanding, and were it much better stored, I should endeavour to carry on the commerce of conversation at an equal rate; for envy, as well as avarice, will murder where it suspects too great a treasure. As the Virtues and Graces, as well as Cupid and Hymen, will assist at Mr. Pitt's nuptials, I think he could not choose a better place for their celebration than Wickham, their capital seat. I wish them many happy years together, and God bless them with health and every good; so much from an honest heart in plain prose, and homely phrase; what the Muses have to say on the occasion, we must wait to hear from you. I hope while you are at Croydon, the good Archbishop will animate you to defy that foul fiend, my Lord Bolingbroke: I believe I shall take some of Ward's sneezing

powder to clear my head of the impieties and impurities of his book. I am not satisfied with Mr. Warburton's answer, the levity shocks me, the indecency displeases me, the grossièreté disgusts me. I love to see the doctrine of Christianity defended by the spirit of Christianity. When absurdity is mixed with impiety, it ceases to be a jest. I can laugh at his Lordship's cavils at Mr. Locke, his envy to Plato, and all the old philosophers, but I could with great seriousness apply to him the words of his friend and poet, to the dunces:

> 'Tis yours a Bacon or a Locke to blame,
> A Newton's genius, or a Milton's flame:
> But oh! with one, immortal one dispense,
> The source of Newton's light, or Bacon's sense.

But I must do his Lordship the justice to say, that what he wants in faith, he makes up in confidence, for after having assured you it is absurd to affirm God is just or good, he declares he is willing to trust the being whose attributes he cannot know, to dispose of him in another

world, not at all doubting that the supreme being will be good to him, without goodness, and just to him, without justice. He laughs at the faith of Abraham, and I should do so too if Abraham had disputed God's veracity, and then trusted to his promises. I never read such a heap of inconsistencies and contradictions, such a vain ostentation of learning, and if I dared, I would say it, all that can shew, "the trifling head or the corrupted heart." I think I may venture to say trifling for whatever does not relate to the argument, is so, and to teize the gentle reader with all the miserable sophisms that perplexed the world two thousand years ago, is barbarous. I wanted to apply to him the epigram on Hearne, the antiquarian,

> Fye on thee, quoth Time to Thomas Hearne,
> Whatever I forget, you learn.

As well as I love travelling, I never desire to go into Greece with Lord Bolingbroke, to the rag fair of the ancient philosophers. I thank his Lordship though, for making me once more look into Mr. Locke and

Doctor Clarke, in the veneration of whom I believe I shall live and die. I am very glad that my amiable Miss Pitt was so good, as to regret that she could not come to Sandleford. I know her tender affection for her brother will make her rejoice to see him so happily settled, and that he has fixed his choice on a lady who will make her so agreeable a sister. Pray when you see Miss Pitt, say every thing that is kind and affectionate for me, you know you need not fear going beyond the truth. I find that you are likely to be at Chelsea before we get to town. Mr. Montagu talks to me of a wood, and a fall of water, and a serpentine river, and I know not what, that are quite out of season at present, but he does not yet tell me when we are to go to town, and I am tired of the vegetable world.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill Street, November the 23th, 1754.

My dearest Cousin,

FROM country Joan I am, according to my ambitious views, settled into gossip Joan, and by no supernatural metamorphosing powers, but merely by the help of so ordinary a vehicle as a post chaise, which wrought this happy change between the hours of seven in the morning and five in the afternoon; the subject no doubt was well prepared that would so easily receive the alteration. In my town character I made fifteen visits last night; I should not so suddenly have assumed my great hoop if I had not desired to pay the earliest respect to Lady Hester Pitt. I came to town on Wednesday night, and was too weary to write to you, I proposed doing it on Thursday evening, but my brother Robinson hindered me by making a long visit. Yesterday morning was divided amongst milliners, mantua-makers,

mercers, and such as deal in the small wares of vanity. At night, at my return from my visits, I found your letter, and to see the dangers of any commerce with the world, and even the best people in it, I was in great danger of extreme vanity from the Archbishop of Canterbury* and Mr. West. Whose applause could be so likely to awaken it? Certainly their esteem would do me the highest honour, but extremes still bring their remedies; a desire of being approved by such persons leads to serious reflections, and makes one cast an examining glance upon oneself that ill agrees with the superficial contentments of vanity. If his Grace says any good of me, I shall be at a world of pains in endeavouring to deserve it; for his praise is one of the highest wordly rewards that merit can receive, and merit only dares to adopt it. I cannot say I am quite satisfied with you for communicating those superficial remarks I had made on Lord Bolingbroke; you know I write without care, and almost

* Dr. Herring.

without thinking; and when I correspond with you I leave out all your character, but that of the kind friend and the affectionate cousin, and pay you a sort of pepper-corn rent and acknowledgment, such as suits my circumstances, and shews my duty, but not what might be expected from paper addressed to the celebrated Gilbert West. However, as the Archbishop certainly read my letter with this key, there is no harm done, but remember that his judgment is tempered with that benevolence and gentleness rarely to be met with; and pray do not be encouraged ever to communicate any of my letters to tempers less angelic. Fame speaks with so many voices, and such confusion of report as to the changes of ministers, that I dare not repeat a word of her babble. I have always thought saying what one does not know to be true, too near of kin to the mendacious art of saying what one knows to be false, and in public and in private matters one should abstain from it. I hope we shall very soon hear of your being settled at Chelsea;

I shall often call in a morning, but it is grievous that you are quite out of the reach of an afternoon's visit, and the evenings are the best hours for society; but I believe I shall think those the best hours in which I can have your company. I am delighted when I read your account of your felicities; if my sincerest regard, esteem, and affection, may be put into the catalogue, I am still more delighted. That the great Disposer of all things may be bounteous still to give you nought but good, is my sincerest prayer; this certain comfort I have, that the pious and patient mind turns all things to benefits. When humility receives what mercy and wisdom ordain it must be well, but one cannot help wishing ones friend those things that our short-sighted ken can discern to be good in the first instance. Pray remember* Chelsea and your most affectionate

E. MONTAGU.

* Mr. Pitt made Mr. West Treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

To Mrs. Scott, her Sister.

My dear Sister,

I AM so apt to transgress as a correspondent, that I have not a new apology to put on my fault, so beg that you will cover it with charity, and always remember that want of leisure, not want of love, occasions my silence. I imagine that you will be glad to hear the history of the times, which indeed, bring forth daily wonders, nor is it the least, that the most profound arithmetician, and the greatest calculator, one who carried Demoivre's Probabilités de la vie humaine in his pocket, never foresaw that spending ten times his income, would ruin his fortune, and that he found no way to make the book of debtor and creditor even, but paying that debt, which dissolves all other obligations? You will guess I mean Lord Montfort and his pistol; he had not discovered any marks of insanity, on the contrary, all was deliberate, calm, and cool; having said

so much of his indiscretion, I think with the rest of the world, I may acquit him of the imputation of cunning and sharping, but what can one say in defence of a conduct, that had all the appearance of deep knavery, and the consequences of inconsiderate rashness and folly? To appear much less cunning, and in reality be much more discreet, must be one's wish. Many reasons have been given for his Lordship's violent act, but by what I learn from those best acquained with his person and fortune, he was not under the pressure of any very heavy debt, but had a true Epicurean character, loved a degree of voluptuousness that his fortune could not afford, and a splendour of life it could not supply; much of his relish for the world was lost, and like one that has no appetite to ordinary fare, he chose to rise from table, unless Fortune would make him a feast. I have entered into the particulars of this, because of all the violent deaths I have known in our days, either great difficulties, cruel disappointments, the short madness of anger, or real insanity of

mind, have been the occasion, and one can hardly imagine the great law of nature, self-preservation, should be reasoned down by the indolent persuasions of a delicate volupté. When Lord Montfort's children were paid their demands on his estate, I hear he had only twelve hundred pounds a year clear, and in table, equipage, and retinue, he equalled, and in the first article perhaps, excelled the largest fortunes. To retrench or to die was the question; he reasoned like Hamlet, but left out the great argument of a future state. I thought that at the Bath, among the multitude of reports, you might not know what was really Lord Montfort's situation. The next extraordinary affair, is a slander that has been spread of a certain great lady; it began among the servants, it circulated first amongst the vulgar, the tincture of calumny made it received for a little while in some degree among the better sort, but they soon discarded it; but it is not yet dismissed entirely by the low people, and what is unfortunate; their Graces appearance in

town together, which would have extinguished the flame, is retarded by her Grace's having been taken ill in the country within these few days. However, one must do that justice to the people of fashion, they have not any doubts of the falsehood of the report; from the first, they all said it was a lye, but now they look as if they were convinced of its being one, which candid interpretation did not shew itself in the faces of all people at the card-table a week ago. Lady Albemarle's dream of her lord taking leave of her, amused the town for a day or two, but few people's waking thoughts deserve one's attention, and the sleeping reveries are still a more trifling subject. Mr. Harris's passionate love for Nanny Conway diverts the town; they sigh to soft music at the opera together, whisper at assemblies, and are as foolish as if they were really in love. Lord Waldegrave's marriage does not proceed, whether the delay be owing to the extreme coldness of the weather, or that reason meddles where he has no business, in the decision

of a love affair, I know not. I am in hopes of seeing Lady Sandwich this week. I am much charmed with Madame de Salis, her manner, her address, her understanding, are all of the first rate, she has l'esprit orné with a great deal of knowledge of the world. I grieve to think she should return to the Switzerland mountains; she was made for polite society. Miss Charlotte Fane is in good health and spirits; we were at the opera together on Saturday, and she and Madame de Salis were with me on Monday evening. I have lately been engaged in a melancholy employment, condolence with poor Mr. and Mrs. West, on the loss of their son, who died of a bilious fever, occasioned by his want of attention to the jaundice, which attacked him in the season of plays and operas, and he preferred them to the care of his health; he died very suddenly: the poor parents received the blow with surprising patience.

Mr. Lyttelton is going to South Carolina as governor, and his sister dreading such a separation, desires to accompany him,

and is preparing for the voyage. Pray have you read Mr. Hume's History of James the Ist and Charles the Ist. I am afraid it will rather promote Jacobitism, but it is entertaining and lively, and will amuse you.

If at Bath you live a life of reason, amusement in reading will not be recommendation enough, and indeed till all the classic authors have been thoroughly studied, it is wrong to throw away one's time upon books that afford very little real instruction; but I cannot help picking up the mushrooms of the day. As Lord Albemarle had a champignon undigested in his stomach, some will be found as crude in my head, if my executors should open it; but as there is no treasure there, I hope they will not indulge such an idle curiosity. I suppose you know there are two volumes of Madame Sevigné's Letters come out this winter; they are amusing, as the anecdotes of a person one has a regard for, but they were rejected in former editions, as not being so brilliant as those published before. I do not hear of any

thing new from Paris, but a novel of Crebillon's, which I am told is not very decent. Fred. Montagu studies the law with great application, and left the University of Cambridge with an extraordinary character. My brother Robinson is emulating the great Diogenes, and other budge doctors of the Stoic fur; he flies the delights of London, and leads a live of such privacy and seriousness as looks to the beholder like wisdom, but for my part, I think no life of inaction deserves that name. As mock sable, so is mock wisdom the darker of the two, and by that deceives the injudicious. My best compliments to Lady Bab. Pray take care of your health; mine continues surprisingly good, and I am grown so fat and so young, as surprises all my acquaintance. My brother Morris dined here on Saturday, he is very well, as is also our friend Charles. Miss Furnese is to be married to Mr. Dering in about a fortnight. Sir Edward is very happy in it. I wish my bad example as a correspondent may not influence you; it is always a great

pleasure to me to hear of my dear sister; may many happy years attend you.

I am, my dear,
your most affectionate sister,
and sincere friend,
E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

June the 26th, 1755.

I KNOW not any thing that can so agreeably enliven my leisure, as a letter from my dear Cousin, nor any thing that would so much disturb my tranquillity, as alarms for his health. From peace and leisure, the third blessing, health, is to arise, so by writing to me often, you may help to effect your good wishes. You bid me not regret your not seeing me in London on the Monday, the time is past, the opportunity lost, and therefore wisdom and you, say very well I should not waste time in vain regret; but friendship and *I* say,

that a meeting for friends that are to be so long asunder, is not so slightly passed over, and that I cannot help regretting, that these hours were not spent with you, though they are now as much lost in the vast ocean of eternity, as those the antidiluvians spent with their cousins; but the memory has its treasury, and so tenacious is its nature, it can fix the fleeting moments, or recal them at pleasure. I am rejoiced to hear that health sits down to dinner with you every day; while she is your attendant, I shall think her my friend, whether she visits me or not, indeed she has been very good to me ever since I came hither; I have made her lady of my bed-chamber, and she calls me up before seven, and puts me to bed at eleven. I wonder at your good Admiral, who could not sleep in a quiet house; I have known many people who could not keep awake in one; but I assure you I preserve all my vivacity and good spirits, though I am deep embosomed in tranquillity. Mr. Montagu has been studiously disposed ever since we came to

Sandleford, so that I pass seven or eight hours every day entirely alone. Five months are to pass, before I return to the land of the living, but I can amuse myself in the regions of the dead: if it rains so that I cannot walk in the garden, Virgil will carry me into the Elysian fields, or Milton into Paradise. Writers of more sacred inspiration offer a nobler prospect, and when every animal is chearfully running its little circle, shall that called rational, to whom only it is given to look back to remote ages, and forward to future existence, who has the resources of recollection and expectation, be discontented and ill-humoured? How many powers must we neglect! how many mercies must we forget, before we fall into melancholy! hence, loathed melancholy! I will have none of it. I hear that the Squire of Dames has at last found a Florimel worthy of the matrimonial vows; I wish him all happiness; he has delicacy enough to make him very happy or very miserable, and restlessness enough to be very uneasy in a state too insipid to allow

of neither; if Miss Scudamore (for that is her name,) has as many amiable qualities as our friend, they may be extremely happy. I could not hear any thing particular concerning her character or fortune, but only that she had been handsome, and it was on both sides a marriage of inclination.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Montagu, from Gilbert West, Esq.

Wickham, 1st of July, 1755.

My dearest Cousin,

I HAD begun a letter to you yesterday, but was hindered from proceeding in it, by a visit from the Archbishop, who came to bless our expedition to Tunbridge; for the good wishes of a good man, are to be considered as benedictory prayers. I rejoice to learn that you enjoy so truly the blessings of the country, health, peace,

and leisure; which though inferior to the nobler and more animated pleasures of the town, derive some kind of value from change and variety, and serve like shades, to set off and heighten the more luminous and more important objects in the perspective picture of human life, and are perhaps, physically necessary to recruit the mind and body with a fresh supply of animal spirits, to enable it to go through the bustling idleness, or *strenua inertia*, of the town-campaign; for which as you are so admirably qualified by nature and inclination, I would fain have you as completely armed, and as amply provided. I much approve, therefore, of your diligence in furnishing your magazines with large stores of ammunition of all sorts for conversation, from authors of various kinds; among which, as your victories will give occasion to many rejoicings, I hope you will not fail to provide a good quantity of French squibs and crackers; you had, if you have not wasted it, a sufficient store of wild-fire of your own. I approve likewise, of your taking a walk now and

then with Milton in his Paradise, it is a fine resource now you are at such a distance from Kensington Gardens, and may serve to amuse your taste for natural philosophy, by presenting you with some exotics, both plants and flowers. As to Virgil's Elysium, though I own there is a great deal of good company to be met with in his fortunate groves and myrtle woods; yet I must take the liberty to caution you against what he calls his Lugentes Campi, the air of which seems to have a melancholy effect, though it is often not felt immediately at the first entrance. You have indeed set melancholy at defiance; but have a care, she is a subtle foe, and generally attacks by stealth and at unawares. The Campi Lugentes, though they make part of Elysium, make, at the same time, a part of her territories. And now, as I perceive you are in a right way, I shall add no more but my wishes, that you may proceed happily in your course, and arrive in due time full of health, and spirits, and alacrity, at that other Paradise described by Milton, under

the fictitious and opprobrious name, of the Limbo of Vanity, to which all choice spirits, especially of the fair sex, direct their coaches and post-chaises, with the utmost impatience, to find their jewels, their hoops, their pompons, &c. and all the various pleasures, which were lost to them during their residence in earth, in that dull clod, the country.

We set out next Thursday for Tunbridge. Lady Cobham and Harriet come here to-morrow, that we may travel together, and dine with Lady Lambert in our way. I hope to meet at Tunbridge a novelty, which I think I never met there but once, viz. a letter from you. Though, to say truth, I had much rather meet you there in person, for it is the oddness of my temper, to love to see an old friend, better than a new acquaintance. Pardon me, Madam, for declaring so unfashionable a taste, to so polite a lady. But you are now in the country, and at leisure to admit and entertain your friends, the chief of whom (I say the *chief*, for conscious honesty is sometimes proud,) professes to be, with

an unpolite sincerity, but with the polite addition of, *with the utmost respect,*

my dearest Cousin,
most faithfully and most affectionately
yours,

GIL. WEST.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

The 3d of July, 1755.

My dearest Cousin,

THOUGH good wishes from under a lawn handkerchief, may not be so beneficial as benedictions laid on your head by lawn sleeves, yet as my zeal for your health is equal to that of the best of Archbishops, I will send you my most earnest wishes, that the Tunbridge waters may do you all imaginable service. If I were to tell you I cannot hear of your being at Tunbridge without wishing myself there, such is your disposition to believe me fond of crouds and assemblies; you would think

I disguised my desire, to be at the rooms and walks, *sous le nom d'amitié*, but comment on my text as you please, when I hear you are at Tunbridge, I shall wish to be there. Pray tell me who has the white stone-house, where the rites of hospitality and all the sweet civilities of life, were so nobly performed by Mr. Pitt. I shall be sorry to hear it is prophaned by the residence of some tallow-chandler, brazier, or pewterer, or some man of quality, who, compared to Mr. Pitt, may be brass or pewter, or metal of base alloy. I am diverted to see you think me equally unreasonable, whether I amuse myself in society or solitude; you do not find in me that spirit of repining and dislike, which is the fashionable livery of extraordinary merit. I know that persons of delicacy can be pleased only with some particular system of life; for my own part, I have endeavoured always to move easily and chearfully on the sphere I am placed in. There are few situations that do not allow of some pleasures, and I am always ready to take such as offer, though they may

not be of the sort I should choose. I could be glad to enjoy the conversation of some agreeable friends here, such absolute solitude is not to my taste, but what then! shall I not endeavour to be as happy as I can, because I may not be as happy as I would? so, my dear Cousin, with your leave, I will amuse myself with books and such pleasures as the country affords, and in November, most willingly return to London; not for reasons so absurd as you are pleased to honour me with, but that really after five months of the most serious retirement, I shall be glad to return to the chearful joys of society, and if you add, to the idle dissipations of town in some degree, I acquiesce; an opera, a play, a burletta, an assembly, are all good in their turn, and if ever you see me affect to be too wise for them, I beg you to intimate that such wisdom can become my mind, no better than Leotard's great beard would my face. I hope you will meet with an agreeable set of company at Tunbridge, and the weather seems to promise well. By

your letter, which I received last night, I understand that you are to set out to-day; pray let me know how you pass your time, and what parties you fall into; fine weather will give me the greater satisfaction, as it is a pleasure you will partake with me; the beginning of this week would have been unpleasant at the Wells, where dry weather is necessary. By your taking no notice of what I said concerning Mr. Torriano's marriage, I presume you were before informed of it, or did the hoops and pompons which have taken violent possession of your imagination, drive it out of your mind. Pray, Cousin, had not one better wear pompons on the outside, than in the inside of one's head? let me beg that you will drive them out of your memory, till I direct my post chaise to London to visit them. I desire my compliments to Mrs. West, Lady Cobham, and Miss Speed.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Montagu, from Gilbert West, Esq.

Tunbridge Wells, 9th of July, 1755.

My dear Cousin,

I SHALL make no apology for delaying these three posts to return an answer to your letter. Your own example will justify me to you, an example to me always of the greatest authority, especially when it happens to fall in with my own way of thinking, who, from my natural or acquired aversion to writing letters, or indolence, as I know you will term it, look upon the necessity of answering the letters of one's friends, as an additional burden to the many grievances of absence. The case, I am sensible, is very different with you, whose tongue is the pen of a ready writer, or rather, whose pen is the tongue of a ready and an eloquent speaker. You therefore may well be distressed, when you have not the excuse of sickness or some great disaster, to plead for not writing so punctually as you ought, and

are qualified by nature as well as habit to do. As for the life I now lead here, it affords so little variety, and is so very dull and uniform, that I cannot pick out any incidents that can yield you entertainment. It is in almost every circumstance very different from that I have ever lived before upon Mount Ephraim, for this reason, I avoid bringing them into a comparison; and therefore try my utmost to banish from my memory every idea of times past; and to separate from every object round about me, all those associations from which I once imagined I should always be able to derive pleasure; but experience has taught me, that it is not always agreeable to recollect past joys; and you have called upon me to reflect, that there are few situations that do not allow of some pleasures, and that to be willing and ready to take those that offer, is the happiest disposition of mind. Adieu then, the happy seasons of 1750, 51, 52, and 53, come no more to disquiet and sadden 1755. She pretends not to compare her joys with your's; yet she offers

health, tranquillity, and content. I hope you will for the future make no more inquiries, that may lead my imagination back to past times. When I pass along Mount Ephraim, and see the stone-house, &c. I think not of Mr. Pitt, &c. but consider it as belonging to Mr. Walpole and Lady Rachel, persons with whom I have no concern, and so pass careless on to the well, drink my waters, then, perhaps, take a turn round the common, go upon the walks; make my bows to half a dozen ladies, and say half a dozen words to each of them; and if I can, select some to converse with; among these, I find none so agreeable as your friend Mrs. Vesey, who arrived at Tunbridge the day we came, and took occasion soon after to begin a conversation with me, by inquiring after you; since that time we are become acquainted, and seem to like one another very well; I imagine for the same reason, namely, because we both love and honour you. We both agree in wishing you here; which wish she often expresses in asking me, whether I cannot prevail upon you to come? to which when I sadly answer no, she

sighs, and we part; that thought making us both unfit for any further conversation. I sometimes, in society with Bishop Gilbert and his daughter,* lament the fate of our poor friend Torriano. Miss Scudamore has the character of a good, as well as of a pretty woman; but she has but very little money, which will put them under the necessity of living altogether in Herefordshire, a circumstance which his friends will have reason to lament however it may fare with him—but this subject wakes my memory to past pleasures, which I do my utmost to avoid. Torriano settled in Herefordshire for life; and you for six months in Berkshire; The two principal acquisitions of Tunbridge in the year 1750! wonder not that I break off so abruptly—I cannot be in a fitter disposition to assure you, that

I am, my dearest Cousin,
most warmly and most sincerely your
most affectionate friend,

GIL. WEST.

* Afterwards Countess of Mount Edgcumbe.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

The 13th of July.

My dearest Cousin,

NEVER was good doctrine more thrown away and wasted, than all your letter said concerning the vanity of regretting past years and past pleasures; for shall I own my hardness of heart? even while I read your letter, I was regretting those hours in which I used to hear you talk; and yet there is no hour of your absence in which I regret the loss of your company so little, as that in which I receive a letter from you. I try to acquiesce in my situation, but you may be assured I cannot be much pleased with it; though chearful spirits and an easy temper can bear solitude, yet is it possible not to wish for conversation in which one finds delight and improvement? I regret your absence as you would wish your friend to do, but I bear it as you expect of your disciple, and endeavour

to imitate the patience and fortitude I admire in you. You cannot imagine that I should not be glad to come to Tunbridge, where I have always improved my stock of health, and have acquired such valuable friends; the manner of life there too, was very agreeable to me, but Mr. Montagu is happier here, and I ought to make his happiness my principal object. My constitution is not so strong, that it would not receive benefit by the waters, but I cannot say I am ill, and must content myself with the advantages of air and exercise which this situation affords. I have not any person in the neighbourhood whose conversation can give me a moment's amusement. Last Tuesday Mr. Botham came hither, as did also a Dr. Gregory, an ingenious agreeable man. Mr. Botham left us yesterday, the other will stay some days longer. I am to go to Hatchlands to Mrs. Boscawen, on Thursday, and shall stay a week; you may suppose I am very happy to have leave for this expedition, and shall pass my time

very agreeably with our amiable Mrs. Boscawen, and you will often be the subject of our discourse. I am glad to hear the Bishop of London is at Tunbridge, as he has always found benefit there. His Lordship and Mrs. Sherlock are so valuable and respectable, there is no merit in having gratitude towards them, and I am not sure that my regard for the Bishop is as Mr. Botham's patron; pray exhort him daily to publish the rest of his divine sermons. I am glad you are acquainted with Mrs. Vesey, she is a very amiable agreeable woman, and has an easy politeness that gains one in a moment, and in reserve she has good sense and an improved mind, to keep up the approbation she acquired by her manners. She is so entirely polite, that it is a wonder if one ever reflects, that she is polite at all, her behaviour "shews no part of study but the grace." I am sorry for our friend Torriano's match, not only as the world will lose him, but as he is to lose the world, which with all its faults, is not to

be entirely quitted. Man and wife should always have something to charge with their ennui. The impertinence of society bears the blame very well, in solitude they must accuse each other of all they suffer of it. I do not understand why they should live in Herefordshire, unless they are very fond of cyder, for in my opinion, London is the best place for people of moderate circumstances. In the country, people are respected merely according to the acres they possess; an equipage is necessary, and company must be entertained at a great expense; a small house, and very few servants and a private table, will do in London, and society may be had on easy terms. Poor Torri will hate his wife and golden pippins, in a year's residence in Herefordshire. I am afraid his friend Stillingfleet has left Herefordshire, and the ordinary conversation of country gentlemen will not amuse him. I desire my best compliments to Mrs. West, and acknowledgments to Mrs. Vesey for her remembrance of me. My compliments

are due to Mr. and Mrs. Dowding, and the smiling missy.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

P. S. Since I wrote this, Miss Pitt arrived here, to my great joy; we are to go together to Hatchlands on Thursday.

To her Husband.

Hatchlands, Friday July, 1755.

My Dearest,

I SHOULD be very sorry if I thought you did not regret my absence, and am uneasy whenever I think you do. We were received by Mrs. Boscawen with the most joyful welcome, and we found her in great spirits, on account of the taking of the two French men of war. Mr. Hoquart had been taken twice by Mr. Boscawen in the last war, but did not surrender himself in this engagement, till 44 men were killed on board of his ship. Mr. Boscawen

writes, that he lives at great expense, having 11 French officers at his table, whom he entertains with magnificence; and there were eight companies of soldiers on board the Alcide and the Lys. I hope as Admiral Holborn has joined Mr. Boscawen, we may soon hear of a more considerable victory. As we have let slip the dogs of war, I am for pursuing the advantage, our sailors are animated with their success, and their's must be discouraged. The Duke* declares himself well pleased with Mr. Boscawen for this enterprise, some people imagine the more wary (I must not say timid) disposition of the Duke of Newcastle, may make him receive the news with less pleasure. Mr. Boscawen wrote to Lord Anson, that not being able to prevent the French from landing their troops by any other method, he was obliged to take this, but was very much concerned that the Dauphin (which had chests of arms, and some say silver on board,) had escaped by means of a fog. Mrs. Boscawen is every hour receiving

* Of Cumberland.

letters or messages of congratulation on Mr. Boscawen's success; he has done enough to keep him from the resentment of the populace, but I hope he will perform something more considerable for the advantage of his country, and his own reputation. We suppose his orders were discretionary, for if they had been positive to attack, he needed not to have apologised for the action to Lord Anson and the Regency, and if he had acted contrary to his orders, he must have apologised more humbly: however, it recommends him to the mob, that he is thought to have acted contrary to orders, for vulgar minds look on disobedience to superiors, as the noblest effort of courage, and a man who can fight the French, and defy the ministry, is a demi-god in their opinions. Mr. Boscawen said in his last letter, that he hoped he should hear I had been at Hatchlands.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, the 27th July, 1755.

I AM so ashamed that I cannot plead a broken arm, or some terrible disease or unhappy disaster, as the reason of my not thanking you for the favour of your last kind and obliging letter, that I hardly rejoice in the perfect health I am in. Your letter found me at Hatchlands, rejoicing with our amiable friend, on her husband's success in the West Indies; as there is as much of honour, as tenderness in her disposition, she is very happy on this occasion. I spent nine days at Hatchlands, but we were so continually engaged in walking about the park, or seeing places in the neighbourhood, that I had not time to write a long letter to my dear Cousin, and could I think of writing a short answer to a letter which deserved so much grateful acknowledgments? I know that you will be glad to hear Mrs. Boscawen has a pretty place; the house

is situated in the middle of a paddock, which consists of only an hundred acres, but the trees are so well disposed, the ground so happily shaped, the prospects so chearful, the verdure so fine, it makes a most pleasing pastoral scene; it was much animated by the hay-makers, and would have made, well delineated, a proper frontispiece to Milton's Allegro. I could not help pitying Mr. Boscawen, whom honour obliged to change this scene of peace and plenty, and to quit his amiable and chearful companion, for the stern trade of war, the rough and treacherous element of the sea, and all the incumbrances and embarrassment of a considerable command: but I think the Odyssey tells us, the Syrens' notes of pleasure and soft repose, are not so tempting, as the voice that speaks of glory and renown. It is happy for us, who desire to idle life away in the vale of peace, that honour has such enchantments, and calls forth the bravest spirits to "seek the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth." Two regiments of the French

service, and many of their best engineers, are taken in the Alcide and the Lys. A fog, if we speak of second causes, but rather that over-ruling Power, who gives not always the race to the swift, or the battle to the strong, preserved the Dauphin, on board of which, they say, there were many chests of arms; Monsieur Hoquart made a gallant defence, but at last, de bonne grace surrendered to Mr. Boscawen, by whom he had been twice taken in the last war. Mr. Boscawen had only two men killed on board his ship, the French surrendering at the firing of his first gun. Monsieur Mirepoix threatened us at his departure, with la guerre la plus sanglante qui fut jamais, but by his *depit*, I imagine the French would have been better pleased, if we would have let them silently and quietly have possessed themselves of the West Indies, their address being greater than their bravery. This successful beginning has raised the courage of the people to a great height, but their courage is rather petulant than lasting, and the burden of taxes and change

of fortune, will soon make them weary of the war they are so impatient to commence: for my part, I am always sorry when the delirium of ambition runs so high as to require bleeding. I know nothing of the state of nations and the interests of princes, but it seems strangely against the general interests of mankind, to be cutting o.. another's throats, and I wonder that the great of this world, who are indeed the proprietors of all, should choose rather to reap the "iron harvest of the field," than the rich gifts of golden Ceres. Much better might Shakespear have said of the method of gathering laurels on the dangerous steeps and rocks of ambition, dreadful trade! than of picking samphire on the cliff. Mrs. Boscawen and Miss Pitt expressed many thanks for the kind things you said of them; we often wished we could snatch you off the pantiles, and place you with us in the rural scene of Hatchlands. We are now in the glooms of November, but my amiable Miss Pitt enlivens my situation. I am extremely rejoiced that the Bishop of

London animates you in your undertaking, I hope you will persevere, and I doubt not of your doing good to others, and honour to yourself.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

The 10th of August, 1755.

I THINK it highly reasonable that I should give you two letters for one; your words and your time are double, at least, the value of mine, but in so blank a life as I lead, what can I find to fill a letter? the history of idle Joan in prose, would be very dull, and I cannot write verse. I am afraid that every post should bring Miss Pitt an account, that Lady Hester and Mr. Pitt are returned to Sunning-hill, and I must part with her; I shall find a great loss of her; it is some consolation to me, that you will be a gainer by it, if Mr. Pitt keeps to his intention of spend-

ing some time at Wickham. I love, honour, and admire Miss Pitt more every day; she is very amiable and extremely good. She accommodates herself to the dull manner of life we lead here, and is always chearful and good humoured, she has great honour and esteem for Mr. West, and who has not? but he has nervous complaints, and therefore I am not happy when I think of him. I approve of our friend Torriano's design of living in London, I am sure the Herefordshire scheme would not have answered; I wish there was more money between them, for Cupid is an idle god, and does not love economy and domestic cares. Surely there is not any thing more risible than an old batchelor and an old maid after twenty coquetteries, promising eternal love and constancy. I suppose he addressed Miss Scudamore, as Waller does his mistress,

> Phillis, let not you and I enquire,
> What has been our past desire,
> On what shepherds you have smiled,
> Or what nymphs I have beguiled.

But take advice of present love, and hope by Hymen's sober assistance, it will last for life. I hope he has made a prudent choice, he has all the good sense and delicacy necessary to direct him. He has had no views of interest, but passion has its delusion; however, I imagine he has chosen a woman of merit, and she cannot have proposed to herself any thing but domestic happiness, for their circumstances and situation exclude all other views; so far it seems to be an holy union, and I heartily wish he may be happy, for he has a great deal of merit.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Anstey.

Sandleford, the 26th August, 1755.

Dear Madam,

As I shall rarely have your example to plead in justification of a fault, I am determined to make use of it in my

apology for not writing; though I will own I am guilty of some prevarication in this defence of myself, for if my manner of life had not been such as allowed me very little leisure, I should not have so long delayed writing to my friend. Mrs. Boscawen and your humble servant, were not at all satisfied with your letters, though very ingenious, polite, and agreeable; because we thought something still more ingenious, polite, and agreeable, might have come in their stead. Our society wanted nothing but Mrs. Anstey, to be perfectly happy. We found Mrs. Boscawen in great joy, at Mr. Boscawen's success in the West Indies, every hour brought letters or messages of congratulation; these things added, if possible, to her good humour, wit, and vivacity, and the hours danced away with down upon their feet, as the poet expresses it. When the weather was fine, we passed the day in Hatchlands park. Miss Pitt sung several songs suited to the place. And Mrs. Boscawen knowing my passion for seeing fine places, carried me to Mr. Weston's,

Sir John Evelyn's, and Mr. Hamilton's; the last of which I think Miss West and you visited in your return from Portsmouth. I do not know whether it was then in its vernal pride, and I rather imagine from the season of the year, and your silence about it, it did not appear in so great beauty as when we saw it. I think it is a most agreeable place to live in; there may be others which have in a higher degree any one of the perfections there, but surely there is not any, where so many meet; like a well accomplished companion, it has something to please one in every disposition, and from variety of talents never wearies; and while it thus indulges the present fancy, or presents various charms, it seems not the effect of art or studious complacency, but as if it followed its natural disposition; nothing is forced, nothing seems artificial, but art has been only to the place, what education is to a happy genius; there has been improvement, but no violence to nature. Mr. Weston's is a charming place in a different cast, a fine down adorned with

noble beeches, which fringe the sides of the hills; a rich, gay, extended prospect, and great flocks of sheep feeding, make it a fit abode for an Arcadian prince; all its beauties are *champêtre*. Sir John Evelyn's is a venerable respectable place; the house and furniture remain as left by the famous planter, John Evelyn, and it put me in mind of the old song of an old courtier of the queen's; it has a good old library full of good old books; rooms of decent state, no modern foppery or modern luxury; the woods are very fine, and encompass a small valley, in which there are a great many black cattle feeding, and the fine verdure refreshed by a little stream, makes it very pretty and pleasing; the woods are solemn, some parts of them so sombre, as "to hide you from day's garish eye," in others, day light mitigated by shade is received, and your eye is amused by little openings into the valley; but Mr. Evelyn was a studious philosophic man, and he seems to have dedicated the place to contemplation, and has not courted those objects that might dissipate

the mind. One must own to the honour of former times, that they seemed not to think it necessary the mind should be constantly called forth from itself, and sure there was more of dignity in that, than in our present manners, when people cannot live out of a comedy, a puppet-shew, or a raree-shew: some arts one should imagine to have been imported from Lillyput, and to have been the sport of older children. I spent nine days at Hatchlands, Miss Pitt returned hither with me, and I did not lose the pleasure of her society till Thursday last; you know her so well, I need not tell you it was a great mortification to me to part with her. She is gone to Sunning-hill to her brother. We went every day some little excursion, to see such places or prospects as I thought worth her attention in this part of the world, the rest of our time was divided between reading and walking, à la mode de Sandleford. I do not know exactly when we shall go to my sister at Bath Easton, for I do not propose to leave poor Travile as long as she

continues in this life; her end draws very near. A life of innocence and mortifications, have taught her to meet death with great Christian fortitude, that is, not with philosophical pride and arrogant contempt, but as an awful change, where mercy holds forth the most precious hopes; I go to her several times in a day, and our conversation chiefly turns on her present circumstances. I think there is no flattery more pernicious nor unseasonable, than that often used to the departing. As human nature shrinks at death, one is not to tell people there is absolutely no hope of life; but it is wrong, too, not to let them perceive their danger; I do not mean that a life of guilt may be altered by a deathbed-repentance, but as resignation to the will of God we are assured is a pleasing sacrifice, it is wrong not to let people know their danger, that by patient acquiescence and chearful submission, they may offer that acceptable sacrifice; and surely there is nothing that can us people under the languor of sickness, like the hopes of so happy a

change. I am very glad to see her in all respects so fitly tempered for this great event; indeed I never saw greater composure; some seriousness it ought to give to be soon to appear before Him, in whose sight no one living shall be justified, but thank God here are no terrors, no longings after recovery, but all resignation and submission: I am in hopes she will have little pain in the transition, as she is so much worn out. Her sister being with her, is a great comfort to her. Please to mention when you favor me with a letter, if Mr. Marsham has received benefit by the sea water; one cannot know Lord and Lady Romney personally or by character, and not be interested for them. I make no apology for the length of my letter, for friendship sanctifies babble, and it is with the tenderest and most sincere regard

I am, &c. &c.

E. Montagu.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, September the 26th, 1755.

My most valuable Friend,

YOUR last letter gave me very great joy, as it assured me of the amendment of your health, and the prosecution of your great design. To whom much is given, of him much shall be required; of talents, and of leisure, and of reputation you have a great deal, and all these should be used to the honour of the giver, and the good of mankind. As a lay man, you cannot be suspected of interest in the cause, and as a scholar and a man of wit, are not liable to the imputation of blind superstition; you have every thing to animate you to the undertaking, every thing that can promise success to it. In vain speculations and idle productions of wit, if an author does not please the world, his labour is lost; but in this case, the very intention cannot miss of its reward. How narrow is the sphere, and how short the

duration of us ordinary mortals? "our time a moment, and a point our space," but it is not so with those who can instruct and improve mankind, extend their influence to distant ages and distant nations; "who being dead yet speak," serve as examples to those who have never seen them, and make their retirement useful and glorious. I grieve with you, at the depredations of time upon the Bishop of London's person, it will be long before it shall impair his works; his reward for them, I hope, will be eternal. There is something mortifying to human pride, to see a great genius drooping with age, in step, gesture, and in articulation, approaching to a second infancy. If experience did not teach one otherwise, one should imagine these master spirits of the world, were snatched away in fiery chariots or whirlwinds, but alas! "they creep on their petty pace" to the grave like the rest of the world; their superior comforts arise only from the life they look back upon. I am sorry that you have not found some agreeable society to amuse

you at Tunbridge; dissipation is reckoned good for the health and spirits, but pleasant employment I believe to be better for both; you will wonder at this sentiment from me, but I seek dissipation because I am good for nothing else; if I knew how to be useful, I should like it better. Miss Pitt went to Sunning-hill last Thursday, you may imagine that I was very sorry to lose so agreeable and amiable a friend. I went with her as far as Reading, and did every thing to make a day, that was to do me so much harm, give me a little amusement. We dined in the garden of the inn, from whence there is a fine gay prospect, and after dinner we walked to see the ruins of the old abbey, which was most delightfully situated. The river winds about the richest meadows I ever saw; hills crowned with wood, and adorned by some gentlemens' houses bound the prospect, and make it the most soft and agreeable landscape imaginable; but idleness and content cannot dwell together, luxury first debauched, then ambition seduced the monks; they were

driven from their convent, and the building is totally demolished, the walls serve only to support some fine ivy and shelter owls, who, like the former inhabitants, owe the veneration paid to them to their sequestered life. But why should I depreciate the monastic life? neither monk nor owl can be more retired than I am at present, and I inhabit a convent too, and live by rules, not given indeed by a St. Francis or St. Benedict, but by myself, merely that I may seem to have a reason for what I do. I allot seasons for exercise, for reading, writing, &c. &c. that I may not get into a habit of indolence. As all states have their temptations, solitude has its dæmon of indolence, the most harmless devil I will allow, but such as in time, makes great depredations upon the mind, and steps between us and our best purposes. I have always endeavoured to keep the same degree of spirits in every situation, and my mind is amphibious, and can subsist in different elements. Had I been a Catholic, it would have puzzled my confessor to have found out what was

penance to me. He would perhaps have sent me into the country, shaded me with cypress, yew, and fir trees in an old monastery, placed me out of the reach of any agreeable society, and bade me stay there from June to November; he would have expected to have seen me wan, meager, woe-begone. No such matter—I should have come forth again plump, smiling, debonair, and in this condition do I hope to see you in November next; I shall then have been here about five months, and I can drink no more of this sort of life at a draught, it is as much as I can promise to swallow without making wry faces. I am sure Mrs Vesey will be impatient for her return to England, to profit by the acquaintance she has made with you.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

disappointment, and the loss that may attend it, if the French should think fit to detain the Blandford; but my country neighbours assure me, we are going to make up matters with the French, and if that be true, he may then proceed on his voyage without hazard. You do great honour to my penetration, when you imagine I can dive into the councils of the French, of ministerial men, and fine ladies; I believe the schemes of all these are open to the researches of those who know where to look for them, but we who live in retirement, either seek for them too near the surface, or too deep; where we imagine profound wisdom, we dig very deep for the motive, and sometimes get many fathoms below it: where we do not imagine schemes of such profundity, we think all must lie uncovered on the very surface, and again we are deceived. I should have little to animate me in this search, for the wisdom of statesmen would be of little use to me, if I could find it; one might keep it, as the virtuosi do the natural ore, in a cabinet;

To the Same.

September the 28th, 1755.

My dear Cousin,

I AM sorry that the gout, by the frequency and length of his visits, behaves with the familiarity of an intimate acquaintance, though he was never introduced to you by his proper introductor, intemperance; however, you have therefore to oppose to him the great conquerors of pain, Patience and Fortitude. I heartily wish that good Lady Langham may come to Wickham, a delay of three quarters of a year will appear long to the impatience of maternal love: yet I dare say she will be better pleased to wait for the pleasure of seeing you till next summer, than that you should run the hazard of your health in this season, which is so unusually damp and cold. I had heard of poor governor Lyttelton's catastrophe only from the public papers, till Miss Pitt gave me a more particular account of it. I am very sorry for his

but such as is coined for ordinary use, would be of more service to me. I shall envy Miss Pitt when she is with my friends at Wickham, and my friends at Wickham, when they have Miss Pitt.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

October the 16th, 1755.

My dearest Cousin,

I BEGGED your fair and amiable guest to make my apology for not writing to you at my return to Sandleford. The hurry I was in at Bath Easton, did not allow me to give you any account of the state of my friends there, and of the regular life they lead; I think you will allow it to be a life of reason; but within the sphere of Bath, fashion usually gives the tone, so that I wish the ladies were established in the country, that they might pursue a manner

of life which most people will approve, but very few will commend. My sister rises early, and as soon as she has read prayers to their small family, she sits down to cut out and prepare work for twelve poor girls, whose schooling they pay for; to those whom she finds more than ordinarily capable, she teaches writing and arithmetic herself. The work these children are usually employed in, is making childbed-linen and clothes for poor people in the neighbourhood, which Lady Bab Montagu and she, bestow as they see occasion. Very early on Sunday morning these girls, with twelve little boys whom they also send to school, come to my sister and repeat their catechism, read some chapters, have the principal articles of their religion explained to them, and then are sent to the parish church. These good works are often performed by the Methodist ladies in the heat of enthusiasm, but thank God, my sister's is a calm and rational piety. Her conversation is lively and easy, and she enters into all the reasonable pleasures of society; goes

frequently to the plays and sometimes to balls, &c. They have a very pretty house at Bath for the winter, and one at Bath Easton for the summer; their houses are adorned by the ingenuity of the owners, but as their income is small, they deny themselves unnecessary expenses. My sister seems very happy, it has pleased God to lead her to truth, by the road of affliction; but what draws the sting of death and triumphs over the grave, cannot fail of healing the wounds of disappointment. Lady Bab Montagu concurs with her in all these things, and their convent,* for by its regularity it resembles one, is really a very chearful place. They wanted me very much to stay with them till the meeting of the Parliament, that I might avoid the shock of seeing poor Travile's death, and the melancholy her illness had cast over this place; I could not prevail on myself to give poor Travile such an intimation she was burthensome.

* Mrs. Scott's Novel of Millennium Hall, presents a picture of a sort of conventual family of ladies, united for benevolent and social purposes.

Mrs. Anstey generously intends to come into this melancholy house, to stay with me till we go to town for the meeting of the Parliament. I do not find that Mr. Montagu intends going sooner. He is never in a hurry to change place; for my own part I am thoroughly tired of the country, and should be glad to leave it as soon as poor Travile is released; but as I can endure this sort of life without being out of humour or out of spirits, I shall acquiesce very quietly. Perhaps you will think this arises from stupid insensibility; but I assure you, I have a lively and tender self-love, very sensible to what regards my pleasure; but as Mr. Montagu has an undoubted right to choose what place he shall be in, I feel it most fit and proper to sit here to listen to the winter's wind all day, and the hooting of owls all the evening. I have lately acquired the constant society of a screech-owl, who has taken up its residence under my dressing room window, and utters such a number of melancholy notes, I have been tempted to ask it, whether it stays

in the country against its inclination. When Miss Anstey arrives, she will interrupt my tête-à-tête with the screech-owl, which now lasts several hours every evening.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

☞ Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Gilbert West, says, "he was very often visited by Lyttelton and Pitt, who when they were weary of faction and debates, used at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table and literary conversation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham Lyttelton received that conviction, which produced his Dissertation on St. Paul.

"These two illustrious friends for a while listened to the blandishments of infidelity; and when West's book was published, it was bought by some who did not know his change of opinion, in expectation of new objections against Christianity; and as infidels do not want malignity, they revenged the disappointment by calling him a methodist. Mr. West's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported, that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more extensive power of superintendance, than it was thought proper to allow him.

"In time, however, his revenue was increased; he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkships of the Privy Council, 1752; and Mr. Pitt at last had it in his power to make him Treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

"He was now sufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed; nor could it secure him from the calamities of life; he lost (1755) his only son; and the year after, March 26th, a stroke of the palsy brought to the grave, one of the few poets to whom the grave might be without its terrors."

THE END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

London: Printed by W. Bulmer and Co.
Cleveland-row, St. James's.

now odious! how unpleasant the means of one's justification! Mr. Bower is esteemed by many, very many of my friends, and as I have nothing to bring into society but good humour and good will, very little would it become me to raise disturbances there. And how many charities are dissolved by the division of one friendship? allies, partisans, acquaintance, kindred, and at last, all the gossips in the town mix in the uproar. I hope, and I believe you have been misinformed, but should all you apprehend be proved to the world, I should not blush at having been deceived. I had much rather, even in that very world, where charity may be less in fashion than prudence, be accounted a person of inviolable charity, than of infallible wisdom. Enamoured of the person of virtue, I may be too fond of her picture, and adore her semblance in a hypocrite. I agree with you, that hypocrisy stands first in the black catalogue of crimes, and therefore it should be last in the order of suspicion, for surely we should be most cautious of belief in cases of greatest enormity. In the hazards of a weak and

fallible judgment, I had rather fall into error than cruel injustice. I will make that use of your friendly caution, I think you will be best pleased with, it shall guard me, and hurt no one. As for Mr. West, I do not imagine that he thinks a writer against Popery can have no sin, but I believe he would be apt to suppose such a person might be accused of sins they have not, by some of the church they write against; and a priest at Doway would hardly be admitted as an evidence, by the truly Protestant Gilbert West. Mr. Bower was introduced to me by Mr. West, as an old friend of his, as such I received him without examination or suspicion. The reasons for his coming over to our church and our country, I never attentively examined into; as a Protestant and an Englishwoman I was not surprised that he did so. I know Mr. West has a personal regard for the man, and suspicion sleeps so soundly at the gate of his wisdom, it would not easily be awakened. Such an attempt would make him consider as a martyr, one whom he now only esteems as a friend. The nature

of the times would make people still more alarmed at such an attack, a kind of holy war would commence, recriminations would be made on the characters of his accusers: and in the way of report, hear-say evidence, and vague accusations, what character would be secure? from motives of prudence too, Mr. West would not quarrel with him, for he has many friends among the Scotch nobility, and some among the English of considerable credit. What you have heard of his living immorally with his wife, I dare say is without foundation, for I have heard a very good character of her from ladies of great strictness, who have had many years acquaintance with her. You may be assured I shall not intimate any thing on the subject of Mr. Bower, to my friend and neighbour in Hill-street, it would be an unbecoming presumption in me, to take on me the character of an adviser to a person so much more capable of directing himself. I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

Sir George Lyttelton.

To Mrs. Scott, her Sister.

Hill-Street, November 18th, 1755.

HAVING sinned beyond the reach of apology, in not having thanked you for your letter, I must throw myself on your mercy. On Monday we arrived to dinner at Mrs. Anstey's, I had great pleasure in seeing my old friend in a neat house of her own, presiding at the head of her table as queen regent, which when the days of youth are over, and les jeux et les ris could not be of the party, is a comfortable system. The rose of love blooms only in the spring, and when Damon and Delia grow into Darby and Joan, it is but a homely happiness at best. I find the town is very full: the men are full of politics, and the ladies of birth-day clothes. New ministers and new fashions, are interesting subjects: but I hear that Messrs. Legge, Pitt, and Grenville, though against the subsidy, are not to be turned out. There is a great bustle at

Mr. Garrick's play-house about some dancers, though they are chiefly Germans and Swiss, the mob considers them as French, and I imagine they will be driven off the stage, though the dancers and scenery have cost Mr. Garrick an immense sum; this evening is to decide their fate, and I imagine that at this time there may be a very bloody engagement. As the world is fond of every thing Chinese, Mr. Voltaire has given us a Chinese tragedy, which I would send you if I thought it could entertain you, but I think your good taste would not be pleased with a Chinese tale dressed in a French habit. I read it without any concern. When I compare this indifference with the interest, the admiration, the surprise with which I read what the saucy Frenchman calls les farces monstreuses of Shakespear, I could burn him and his tragedy. Foolish coxcomb! rules can no more make a poet, than receipts a cook. There must be taste, there must be skill. Oh! that we were as sure our fleets and armies could drive the French out of America,

as that our poets and tragedians can drive them out of Parnassus. I hate to see these tame creatures taught to pace by art, attack fancy's sweetest child. Voltaire has made Genghiscan appear in the character of a lover, with a fierce Tartar for the confidant of his amorous cares. The Tartar has indeed the modesty to own he does not understand a lover's language, that he can kill and eat venison, but for wooing, it is out of his province. In fable a lion may be a lover, and a bear the confidant, but I don't like it in tragedy. I imagine if one could call up the ghost of this great hero, he would tell you, he was cruel and fierce in war, but as gentle in love as any French marquis. I hate a bullying lover, one should see people in that in which they excel. Who, but a Frenchman, would have set Genghiscan to make love, he is so angry and so fond, and so brutal and so sentimental, that there is no enduring him. Adieu! the letter-bell rings.

I am, &c. &c.

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Wednesday, the 3d of May.

My dearest Sister,

If I were to tell you how often the follies of a London life, and how often the infirmities of a sickly being have hindered my writing, I should send you a tragi-comedy, the mixture of absurdity would spoil the dignity of your sorrow, and sufferings allay your mirth in the farcical part of my drama. I shall be glad of Voltaire as soon as you and Lady Bab have done with it, and not one moment sooner. I would rather have it here than at Sandleford, for in a more sober way of life I have more serious studies; but Le Roman Historique of M. de Voltaire, does admirably well to make the reveries of a London lady. I suppose you can have Miss Carter's Epictetus at Mr. Leake's. The introduction appears to me a piece of perfect good writing, the doctrine, the style, the order, is admirable. The pre-

ference given to the Gospel morality above the philosopher's, is done with the greatest justice and an animated zeal; parts and learning are never better employed than in setting forth their inability to discover the means of salvation, which it has pleased almighty wisdom to hide from the wise, and reveal to babes and sucklings. Epictetus's Discourses and the Enchiridion, are allowed by all the learned, to be admirably translated; there is so much absurdity in the stoical doctrines, one cannot read their works with intire pleasure, but Epictetus is reckoned one of the best of them, and I believe Miss Carter has done him ample justice. I hope Mr. G. Montagu has sent Lady Bab Mr. Walpole's account of the noble and royal authors of England, it is a work of great wit, written with much spirit and elegance, and highly entertaining. Ld. Hyde's play has made its appearance; it is a moral piece, and that is all one can say in its praise. Lord Thoughtless appears on the stage to deserve rather the name of Lord Senseless, though we

are assured he is a man of great acquired and natural talents. Sir C. Phœnix, from whom, by his name, you expect extraordinary things, is no rare bird at all, and merely deserves the appellation of honnête homme, which even in our degenerate days, is no phœnix. Lord Graveair's character and his catastrophe are absurdities. I suppose you will read the play, as it is by so great a hand. Mr. Walpole has given it a pretty preface. I suppose the great name of Swift, has enticed you to read the lowest of political libels, which he miscalls an History. Miss Carter is to dine with me to-morrow; she is a most amiable, modest, gentle creature, not herissée de Grec, nor blown up with self-opinion. Lady F. Williams inherits a thousand pounds a year from Lady Kildare, and £4,000. in money, the rest is given to Lady Coningsby. Sir Charles Williams is gone into Monmouthshire; he is still so flighty, that had he not always been a wit, he would still pass for a madman. Emin, whom you enquired after, dined with me yesterday; he came over

from Germany as soon as the Duke had made the treaty, and has been in town ever since; he is to wait here till he receives a letter from Prince Heraclius, but his active mind loves not idleness, so Lord Lyttelton pays for his learning French, fencing, boxing, &c. and has been so liberal to him, he has not wanted contributions, which makes him very happy. He has given in a memorial to Mr. Pitt, which contains a grand scheme, and Mr. Pitt said about six weeks ago, he would talk to him upon it, but has not yet had leisure. Mr. Emin's letter to Mr. Pitt is one of the finest things I ever read.

I am, &c. &c.

E. M.

To the Same.

4th of May.

MY DEAR SISTER,

OH the charming month of May! it is now snowing and hailing against my

window with great petulancy, but I should little regard it, if I was not apprehensive that this long winter retards the recovery of some of my friends. I have recovered my looks, which were most piteous, and as you observe, it is not agreeable to look like a corpse, while one remains in the land of the living. I can give you as great a proof of my being superannuated, as if I looked like Mrs. Dunch, or the still more woe-begone Mrs. Bethell. I have to day refused to go to a ball at Lady Townshend's, which is to be brilliant and gay; I had a new pink silver negligée trimmed too with silver fort galamment, in which I was told I looked à merveille, and yet I cannot persuade myself to go to this ball; if I could (as many sober personages do,) call my indolence philosophy, I should take some pride in my laziness, and talk very sagely of the vanity of transient pleasures; but if I have any philosophy it deals not in retail; I may think, perhaps, the whole of this life of poor account; but as beggars do, I take farthings for alms, and for one

farthing's worth of amusement, the charge of all trouble deducted, I should say to any one, thank you and God bless you; but to dress and suffer all the labours of the toillette, the fatigue of late hours, and the hazard of catching cold, pour me divertir moult tristement, I cannot. I am sorry when Vanity offers me her favours, to be obliged to cry, Adieu panier, Vendanges sont faites! Vanity and I were friends, and very cordial ones for some years, and I do not remember that I was ever apt to give ear to those that censured or maligned her; less still did I endeavour to make any amulets by the direction of Wisdom, to disappoint her pleasing sorcery; that I really believe she has left me as lovers do their mistresses, because I was too kind, denied her nothing, and was too complaisant to give a picquancy to our commerce. I think I remember when she would have beckoned me with her light finger over the Alps, or across the ocean, to Lady Townshend's ball. However, as I had once the honour of having my Lady Vanity for my bosom friend, I shall

not, as some of her discarded friends are apt to do, take the humble character of her follower. She is a pleasant companion, and sooths the weary way through her own labyrinth; but unhappy is the wretch that follows her fantastic round, without such a support. As she will no longer pay my attendance with a proper salary, I will retire; but not enter into opposition, as I cannot expect to be taken into place any more, nor will I rail at those in her ministry, for I do not envy them. So I wish that les Jeux et les Ris may lead up the ball to-night, and the Graces go about in the shape of friseurs all this morning, to adorn the fair dames who are to compose the assembly. I should have wrote to you, to have made you easy about Lady Essex, if Mrs. Trevor had not done it. I assure you she is pleine de vie, and will make one of the best ornaments at Lady Townshend's to night. I think she has at present a strict friendship with my quondam friend, the Lady Vanity, who frisks her about to plays, operas, &c. every night; but Innocence is always of

the party. You tell me I should always mention any new book worth reading; there is lately published, an Essay on the Genius and Writings of Mr. Pope, which I think one of the best pieces of criticism I ever read. I believe you will think the observations on Mr. Pope, just and candid; there are many good criticisms on other poets, pretty quotations of pieces not common, a general knowledge of poetry, and a great deal of vivacity in the manner of writing. You must excuse too high encomiums on some living authors: his just panegyric on Mr. West pleased and pained me; I could not help sighing when I recollected,

Deaf's the praised ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.

I hear the author is a Mr. Warton, who belongs to Winchester school. He does not write with the pedantry of a school master. Mr. Leland has published a supplement to his former works, which I have not yet read, for it will be necessary to accompany it with some thinking, and in London, who can think? perhaps

indeed they may, who are lulled by soft zephyrs through the broken pane, but it cannot happen to ladies in Chinese rooms.

I am, &c. &c.

E. M.

To the Same.

Wednesday.

My dear Sister,

MONDAY brought me the pleasure of your letter and the mittens; I never beheld butterflies with so much respect; usually the emblems of frivolité, consecrated by charity they grow as respectable as birds of paradise, and I beg the favour of another dozen of mittens. I believe there is not any foundation for the report of Mr. B——'s marriage, his friends treat it as a jest; I saw him the other day at Lady Frances Williams, and he does not look like Benedict the married man. Why should he fright his household gods, now so bounteous and benign, or with matrimo-

nial argumentation disturb those groves, where Philomel and Mrs. V—— tune their love-laboured song. I have seen very little of Lady Huntingdon, so am not a judge of her merit; if I wanted to paint a fanatic, I should desire her to sit for the picture. I believe and hope she means well, but she makes herself ridiculous to the profane, and dangerous to the good; I have just laid out of my hands an account of Madame Guion, who was a good woman, but the cause of much mischief. I am in possession of Madame de Maintenon's Memoirs and Letters, there are six volumes of the first, nine of the latter. I began with the Memoirs, and have not opened the Letters, which I am assured are genuine. I think the Memoirs will entertain you; and while you read of the tracasseries of a court, you will rejoice in the quiet of Beaufort-square. I admire Madame de Maintenon as the greatest pattern of prudence, which is certainly the queen of female virtues; the men will not allow us to be wise, it is not worth while to take much pains to be

charming, as the reign of the Graces is short, but as says an author, " where there is prudence, no deity is wanting." Minerva maintained an empire for Madame de Maintenon, that the Loves and Graces could not keep for La Valliere, nor Venus for the belle Montespan, nor Juno for the haughty Fontange. If M. de Maintenon had studied the Gospel, instead of listening to a bigotted director, she would have been every thing one could have wished. Mr. Rice is going to be married to Miss Talbot. I am glad I mentioned Lady Essex in my former letter, as I find people had said things to her disadvantage. She coquets extremely with her own husband, which is very lawful, and she has a general air of vivacity, which to those who are herissées with prudery may displease, but she is an amiable fine girl. She wants to have the bon ton, and you know the bon ton of 1756, is un peu équivoque. I wish Minerva had bestowed more, or Venus less of her favours upon Lady Coventry; she is so much caressed at Leicester house, and so admired for her beauty,

that she has made folly more fashionable than ever. This Venus has attacked our Mars the Duke,* and he sighs for her and languishes as much as a hero can languish in time of war. No news yet from Minorca. I rejoice to hear Miss West is better.

Ever your's most affectionately,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill Street, the 28th of May.

My dear Sister,

I AM glad you are going to enjoy the sweet, the tranquil, the rational pleasures of the country; your situation is very agreeable, as you can return to society whenever you please. I love the Elysian fields of Berkshire, but as the Kennet is for me as impassable as the Styx, I am in no haste to get thither, for there is no return, and I do not love to converse merely with spirits, though the society be

the departed souls of heroes, sages, legislators, and poets. We find it was necessary to give a draught of Lethe to these inhabitants of a visionary region, that they might forget the substantial enjoyments of our material world. Mr. Montagu does not seem to remember he has any house in Berkshire; or that it is usual for people to go into the country in summer. If Mr. Leake does not get you Madame de Maintenon, I must send her to you some time this summer; she is worthy to be admitted to your abode at Bath Easton, on many accounts. I think she has no fault but being a Papist, I mean, none but what arise from le petite religion, mixed with scruples and superstition. As true religion elevates, purifies, and ennobles the mind, certainly superstition sinks it below its natural standard; you will grieve to see the sage Madame de Maintenon, the divine Fenelon, and half a dozen learned bishops disputing whether, when Madame Guion unlaces her stays after dinner, she is swelled with the holy spirit or with wind; and instead of prescribing some

carminatives, a larger pair of stays, and a more moderate meal, doubting whether she ought to do penance in a prison, or edify the virgins of St. Cyr. Madame de Maintenon, earnest for the salvation of Louis Quatorze, solicits him to restore Madame de Montespan to her husband, and suffers him to recall the edict of Nantes, and violate thereby the marriage vows he had taken to his kingdom; she is full of compassion towards the poor, and suffers the rich, virtuous, and industrious Huguenot to be plundered, reduced to beggary, and compelled to exile. Her foundation of St. Cyr is wise in the design, and in all the rules for the support of it; she meant it merely as a place of education, they were forced to add nuns of profession from reasons of convenience; she was wise enough to see there was greater merit in educating young women in such a manner, as would qualify them to make good wives and good mothers, than in adding to the number of nuns. Indeed I think there is no charity equal to that of imparting the advantages of religious and virtuous edu-

cation. I should think the races of the nobility and gentry of France, must have been improved by the élèves of St. Cyr. I wish we had such a foundation here, for our married ladies are too much employed in the more necessary duties of the play-house and opera, &c. to give any attention to their daughters. They have masters to give them trivial accomplishments, and so they come out into the world without the timidity of ignorance, or the assistance of real improvement. They are to tread the smooth slippery path of pleasure, neither bare foot, for then they would be cautious, nor frost shod, for then they would be guarded. You will be sorry for poor Sir Dudley Ryder's death; it happened just as he was on the point of getting a peerage; he was taken with a shivering fit, which he imagined to be the beginning of an ague, the physicians gave him the bark, it threw him into convulsions, and his patent, I hope, was made out for a nobler assembly than our house of Peers. I fear poor Lady Ryder has hardly spirits to support such a loss. I

went to Kensington last Sunday, to hear our young divine read prayers and preach; he performed very well, has a good voice, and if you have a mind to know how he looks in his surplice, you need only cast your eyes on my picture over your chimney. I am very anxious to see him enter into the spirit of his profession, which is poor as an amusement, villainous as a trade, but noble as a calling, when the priest, as his Lord, goes about doing good. I hope he will get some of his Cambridge friends to serve his curacy for a fortnight, while he comes to Sandleford, where I will preach to him, if not with argument, with unction. I was with Mrs. West last night, when Lady Cobham came from Lady Lyttelton's concert, where she had heard that Miss West would stay at Bath till the third of June. Miss West had filled her letter to Mrs. West, with Lady Bab's and your praises. We are all impatient for a West wind, to bring us news from Minorca. Lady Sandwich has been with me since I began my letter, to take her leave. Adieu, my dear Sister, take care of your health,

do not trust too much to the invitation of sunshine, while the wind is in the east. People die very fast in town, though they did not design it, did not imagine it, did not remember it was possible. Poor Mrs. Whitsched died the day she was to have had an assembly, Sir D. Ryder, the day he was to have kissed hands for a peerage; people laugh at Mrs. Whitsched's being stopped in so trivial a pursuit, they grieve Sir Dudley was arrested in so glorious a course; with us there was some difference, but where they are gone, each will appear equally important, equally serious. A moment on this side of death, it is of consequence to have a hand full of matadores or trumps, on the other, none to have held a sceptre and grasped the globe. People that do not sleep of nights, are apt to moralise, it is well I said in the beginning of my letter, I was not more stupid than usual, at the end of it I durst not have asserted it; but, my dear and amiable Sister, be assured, I am always

most affectionately yours,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen.

Sandleford, the 6th of November, 1756.

Dear Madam,

THERE is no form of confession drawn for any miserable sinner, equal to my guilt in not writing to you, my sorrow when I did not hear from you, or shame when I did. I hold up my hand and plead guilty of laziness, but no traitor was I to any of the warmest and tenderest sentiments of friendship, so I hope you will not order me to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, nor set my head upon Temple Bar. According to your commands, I will give you my adventures, but as you know my Anno Domini, you will not expect to hear of any fearful rout of enchanters that took me into captivity, or gallant knights that fought bloody battles to set me free. I came to Sandleford on the 6th of

October, on the eighth I set out for Bath. I had the happiness of finding my sister perfectly well. You ask me, what I think of the times? I should despair, absolutely despair of the safety of our poor country, if the uncertainty of human events, and the fallaciousness of appearances, did not tell me that one should never hope confidently, or despair absolutely; and that for the mind, *motley* is the only wear; but after all, my heart is in more than half mourning to see the wretched state of the public. Wars abroad, faction at home, so much ambition among the great, such discontents among the people! ah! poor England. The old king I greatly pity; is it *thus* his faithful subjects rock the cradle of declining age? I do not hear that the bustling ambitious people are at all agreed among themselves; all is anarchy and confusion. I believe the Lord Chancellor will be greatly regretted by all who have any interests depending in his courts. If he retires to his country seat, I think I wish he would take me along with him,

For blest is he, who exercis'd in cares,
To private leisure public virtue bears!
Who tranquil ends the race he nobly run,
And decks repose with trophies labour won.

I never read of a great man in retirement, but I wish to sit at his fire-side, to hear him give his calm judgment on those things his more active powers of ambition made him acquainted with, and of which the spectator judges ignorantly, the busy actor partially. I rejoice that Mr. Boscawen is returning to you; in these times of discontent, all are pleased with *him*, and I assure you it will discredit any new administration, if he is excluded his share of it. No! that cannot, shall not be; it would put the very ocean in a storm, and the large continent of Cornwall into a rebellion. So let what will happen, I shall hear my coach ordered to the *Admiraltree* as usual. How much politics have we had, and not a word of the ablest of politicians, the noble, martial, victorious, and mighty King of Prussia, who is already, in my opinion, but a little less, and in his own opinion, I believe,

much greater, than Alexander the Great. If I was a Queen of Sheba, I believe I should go and see his glory, I am so much his admirer, and so thankful to him for chastising the ingratitude of our imperial ally. If Count Bruhl's flight is not accelerated by his thousand pair of boots, the Prussian monarch may make him repent his saucy letter. I cannot bear that any one should usurp my name, when you are in question; I think you will remember the original Old Blue Boar, and prefer the sincere but homely entertainment there, to the gentillesses and politesses of my fair Cousin, but if you see her again, please to make my compliments.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

The 12th.

MY dear Mrs. Boscawen's letter last night was very cordial to her sickly friend, who

has not yet recovered from the impressions of her illness. I have sat chirping by my fire-side like a cricket, or purring like a tabby cat, or whatever you can imagine most domestic; which I dare say Mrs. Donnellan thinks a treasonable practice, for she claims dominion over all invalids by seniority of age and priority of sickness. If you have not hands enough to pull down your house, let me come, for I am so enraged at its detaining you, I believe I should be as boisterous as Samson. Mr. Pitt recovers peu à peu, and so we must hope will the constitution of England, as he has undertaken its cure. Miss Pitt is very well and in good spirits. I am glad you have so agreeable a society with you; for my part I have no more idea of the joys of the country at Christmas, than the wicked have of the joys of the heavenly Canaan. I want the daily news, the hourly visitants, the variety and change of company during the winter, which presents us with a blank. You see what gross elements I subsist upon. I own it is not great, sublime, nor angelic,

but it is *me*, who confess all my sins and infirmities, in hopes of mild penance and a final absolution. Mrs. Bernard is to be here to night, and I will tell her all your courtesies. I admire Captain H——y's method of watching the battle; I have known people boil an egg with a watch in their hand, counting the minutes, but I never heard we were to do so when we basted the French. If I had been in court, considering the delicacy and effeminacy of the family, I should have asked if he had not his tweezer-case on his left side. By this noble gentleman's evidence, I conceive Mr. Byng's to have been the most bloody engagement that ever happened. The Blakes, Van Tromps and de Ruyters, though men of some courage, must strike the flag to Admiral Byng. I do not believe we shall lose this brave commander by any untimely death. He has abused the late ministry, which I take to be an antidote against ugly accidents. You would have been very angry if you had seen a late Monitor abusing Lord Hardwicke, comparing him directly with

Wolsey, and assuring you he was worse than Jeffries; this abuse cannot hurt the most respectable of men and magistrates, but it is a sad sign of the depravity of our country, when such is the reward of above twenty years meritorious behaviour, in a post of the highest importance.

Ever your's,

E. M.

To Lord Lyttelton.

Sandleford, the 16th of November, 1756.

My Lord,

I think you should have written me a letter of congratulation on Sir George Lyttelton's being made a Peer. Who can feel more joy for any honour virtue and he obtain? we congratulate our friends on the most transient prosperity; but this Peerage is a most solid and lasting advantage, happily timed, and accompanied with such agreeable circumstances, on which I reflect with so much sincere

satisfaction, that I take it almost ill you should take no notice of my felicity. I am too well pleased, and too happy to be captious and quarrelsome, and though it is contrary to all the settled rules of right courtesy, the greater joy shall do homage to the less, and I will congratulate you on the event. You tell Mr. Stillingfleet, your greatest pleasure in this affair arises from the advantage it will be of to your son, and indeed, as you had before raised your name above the dignity of a title, you have not laid any additional weight upon him; but if my little friend was not as extraordinarily promising as he is, I should advise him by all means to change his name, leave his country, turn Mahometan, settle in Turkey, and try whether he could not make a good original Bashaw; for what a task have you imposed on him, who wearing your name or title, will be required to resemble you in public and private life, to bear such esteem with his cotemporaries, and establish such fame with posterity! as Mr. Lyttelton has so great a race to run, I hope he will lose no

time; but exactly follow those first steps your Lordship took towards the acquirement of knowledge and improvement of your talents. I beg my best compliments to him on this happy occasion, and assure him I rejoice without reserve in all advantages he can receive, as I am convinced he will wear them with honour to the world, and the highest gratitude to the person who has procured them for him.

I imagine that when you take your seat in the House of Peers, the ghost of Henry the Second will claim his seat in the temple of Fame, near the heroes recorded by Livy and the great historians of antiquity, assuring them that your Lordship is making out his patent for eternal fame.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Montagu, from Lord Lyttelton.

Hill-street, Nov. 18, 1756.

MADAM,

WHATEVER advantages there may be in a peerage, which you set forth with an eloquence peculiar to yourself, mine has yet given me no greater pleasure than your most obliging congratulations.

My son is much obliged to you for all your goodness to him; yet upon this occasion, my wishes for him are much higher than yours. I hope and expect, from the talents he seems to be endowed with by nature, and from his mother's blood, which runs in his veins, that he will far outgo his father in the career of virtue and honour. An early acquaintance and intimacy with the Madonna will be a further advantage, if she will be so good as to favour him with it, which will form his mind to all that is worthy and noble, and make him amends for the loss of a mother

whose instructions she alone can ever supply.

As I shall probably now have a good deal of leisure I mean soon to resume my Historical Work, which you and my Lord Hardwicke have made be believe is worth the completing. But if, instead of the Life of King Henry the Second, I were to write the history of this last month, it would be more curious and more entertaining. What do you think of five different administrations planned in one day? The Cardinal de Retz would have vastly preferred this subject to the other; but I begin to feel indolence growing upon me as I approach the House of Lords, and therefore think it much wiser to speak truth of great men who lived in this kingdom six hundred years ago, than of those who either are or would be so now. And in some parts of my modern history I should find a great difficulty, which Cardinal de Retz would get over much better than I, the discovering political motives for actions which seem to have none: in that case the imagination of the

Cardinal would supply the defect to the reader; he would prove absurdities to be refinements, and systemize confusion, which I cannot do. I shall therefore content myself with only telling you one part of the history, which relates to myself, and will, I know, give you pleasure. When I carried the Exchequer Seals to the King in his closet, his manner of receiving it was so gracious to me, and accompanied with such expressions of esteem and approbation, that I think I am still more obliged to his Majesty on that account, than for the peerage. Adieu, most amiable Madonna; I can never deserve half the honour you do me, but by the respect and devotion with which I am,

Madam,

your most obliged

and most obedient humble Servant,

LYTTELTON.

To the Hon. Mrs. Boscawen.

Hill-street, Tuesday, 8 *o'Clock.*

My dear and amiable Friend,

WHAT can I say for myself that I have not before answered your kind and agreeable letter, which made me for a while forget we were at a distance, and I thought while I read it we were in a tête-à-tête conversation, it had so much of the salvolátile of lively discourse. I was preparing for my journey when I received your letter, heavy trunks and enormous boxes lay at the bottom of my understanding, and band-boxes in pyramids rose to the top of it. I shall not think I am quite happy till you come to town, for methinks I want my best half. Lady Frances Williams told me on Sunday evening that you had been in town the foregoing week. Quel contretemps! Now you are a country gentlewoman and I am the fine town lady, and the daily news I begged of you, you may request

of my charity. Mr. Pitt, the great Atlas of the state, can support it only with one arm, having the gout in the other, but he will be well enough to be at the House of Commons on Thursday, and if you have not curiosity enough to see the opening of so great a scene you are as great a philosopher as Diogenes, who chose rather to see the sun than Alexander the Great. So pray, Madam, be not so cynical, but come away to town, and leave the sun to raise the snow-drops and crocus's in your garden. Lord Temple has a grievous cold and keeps house, and though time and tide stay for no man, the navy of Great Britain may be more complaisant, and wait his Lordship's health and leisure. The Princess of Wales has been ill; whether she is well enough to shine out in the drawing room to day I know not, having seen no one but my father, who has but little courtly intelligence. I must tell you of an infinite politesse of your Admiral's, for which I desire you to thank him, though I have already done it, but I think your thanks will be many per cent. better

than mine; you must know, finding in my letter to you, that I was hungering and thirsting after the news of the times, he sent me a complete list of who was in, and who was out. You may believe I was very glad he agreed to stay in the Admiralty; setting aside all private considerations, (and such as affect you, weigh much with me,) yet for the public too it is very right, and every man in this country ought to assist the government in this time of danger. There is a lively sort of man who has begun to attack Mr. Pitt's administration before he has ministered, or administered, which I think not altogether fair; the paper is called the Test; it is very well written, but why should he be in the test, till he is brought to the test? indeed these writers agitate and exasperate the silly heads of the silly vulgar, and make the poor beast horn mad. I would have the people bestow all their anger, all their virulence, and whatever courage they have to spare, on our enemies the French; but truly they are for the sport of domestic feuds. I

never knew the world so absurd, and these times do not give leisure to be foolish at a small expense: our country is in danger of ruin, and little factions tear it to pieces. I hear that Mrs. Spencer is really with child, which will make her completely happy. What an absurd thing have I said! Who was ever completely happy in this world? The first created pair, you will say; but they were soon tired of it, and if people are happy, yet there is some apple, a golden pippin, or a red streak, or perhaps a poor russeting, which they fancy necessary to their feast, and if it is out of reach, or not ripe, or forbidden, they have no stomach to the rest of their delicate and sumptuous banquet.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To her Sister.

My dear Sister,

THOUGH fate has denied to me the honour of suckling fools, the inferior female office of chronicleing small beer, remains to me in full force. I had your letter as I was deep in accounts, and it agreeably refreshed a mind that had been travelling from tubs of soap to firkins of butter, and from thence to chaldrons of coals. I have in this sweet occupation consumed the greatest part of the evening, but happy are they, who, if they begin like Martha, end like Mary, and from the affairs of the world conclude with spiritual discourse. By this day's carrier set forth the Works of Voltaire, the Grand Cyrus, and the History of Genghiscan. You will be pleased to read the almost unknown story of the conqueror of a third part of the habitable world. There are many heroic actions there recorded, of which Fame has hardly taken cognizance. These conquerors destroy those Muses that should

record them, and it is but just, oblivion should be the consequence of devastation. I desire you would unpack the box as soon as you receive it, lest so many heroes in so little room should fall a fighting. I do not suspect that Genghiscan, though by Voltaire represented a passionate lover, will quarrel with Cyrus for l'illustre Mandane, but they may dispute the possession of Asia. Voltaire has such an olio of Christian and Mahometan heroes, such a mob of philosophers, legislators, poets, &c. that there may be terrible confusion, and Voltaire having given his best weapons to Turks and Saracens, I shall be afraid for the Faithful; even il Pio Goffredo is by him over-matched with Musselmen. Do you not grieve the Expedition is so sadly expedited? I assure you pheasants and partridge feast me best when they come to your table. I am indeed deprived of my friend, Mrs. Boscawen, she left me on Tuesday last; I was very happy in her company, and we really looked very foolish at parting. She is in very good spirits, and sensible of

her many felicities, which I pray God to preserve to her; but her cup is so full of good, I am always afraid it should spill. She is one of the few whom an unbounded prosperity could not spoil. I think there is not a grain of evil in her composition. She is humble, charitable, pious, of gentle temper, with the firmest principles, with a great deal of discretion, void of any degree of art, warm and constant in her affections, mild towards offenders, but rigorous towards offence, and speaks her opinion very freely to young people in regard to the fashionable levities. She intends to ask Miss Williams to go with her into Surrey, to stay till she comes to London again, and I wish Lady Frances may send her, for Mrs. Boscawen tells her very roundly sometimes of the misconduct of our fine ladies, and even of some who are the Miss's intimates, and as she has a great deal of chearfulness in her manner, what she says does not look like the lessons of severity. Lady Sandwich and Miss Fane are both pretty well.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To her Husband.

MY DEAR,

IN the multitude of counsellors there may be safe counsel, but certainly in the multitude of intelligencers there is danger of false intelligence; however, I shall tell all I hear. First, as to the Hanoverians and Hessians, the King (exasperated at the treatment they have met with, and the sickness they suffer) is desirous that they should return home. For the ministry it is certainly *un drole de Corps.* General Pitt, General Temple, and the other Field Marshals, Grenville, are to attack and destroy the Duke of Newcastle with his own forces, who have received his pay, wear his uniform, and act under these generals, merely by his command. It is not imagined in the present confusion of affairs there will be a new Parliament. Mr. Cleveland was dismissed, and his place offered to three other persons; Governor Grenville the first, but they have all refused it, and so Mr. Cleveland

is restored. Lord Temple and Mr. Pitt are both ill, as I am informed by Mr Torriano; Blakeney is made an Irish Peer, Byng is to be tried very soon; Mr. Pitt transacted his affairs through the mediation of Lady Yarmouth, which was not disagreeable to the King, but makes the fearful subject a little apprehensive: the preliminaries of his treaty were not, as he gave out they should be, the renouncing Hanoverian troops, and Hanoverian interests. Mr. Fox is perfectly out of the question at present, but people in town are so discontented with the administrations being confined to one family, it is imagined Mr. Fox must be called in to assist. All honest people wish the public interest in this time of danger were allowed to prevail over every private view. France threatens us with an equal navy by the spring; there is a great demand for forces in America, and God knows where all this will end. As the weather is so sharp, I do not stir from my dressing-room fire, nor intend to do it till there is a thaw, for indeed I must

not hazard my health, which, like Great Britain, is in a tottering condition. If we were in as great danger of being conquered by the Spaniards as by the French, I should not be very anxious about my continuance in the world; but the French are polite to the ladies, and they admire ladies a little in years, so that I expect to be treated with great politeness, and as all laws are suspended during violence, I suppose that you and the rest of the married men, will not take any thing amiss that happens on the occasion; nor indeed should it be a much greater fault than keeping a monkey, if one should live with a French marquis for a quarter of a year. Torri is to stand god-father to-day to a child of Dr. Cox's, and who do you think is to be his compere? even Admiral Byng: who, some say, should be hanged for his cowardice, and others that he should be knighted for his gallantry. The people in general choose he should be hanged. I have seen Lord Lyttelton and Mr. and Mrs. Torriano this morning,

and have given you all the news I could collect.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Bath Easton, Saturday 30th, 1757.

MY DEAREST,

IT always gives me great pleasure to hear you have received any, and I was therefore much pleased with your account of your visit, and hope in your next you will give me a description of the place, and what may be still more extraordinary, of the philosopher's manner of living there, which I fancy may more resemble that of the sages one has read of, than any thing one has seen; I look upon Mr. Steevens as a man who has disfranchised himself from all slavery to custom and fashion, and who as seldom brushes up or new trims his modes of living as his coat; but wears both as long as they fit him, in

spite of what fops and tailors may say. I hope he will come to Sandleford, for he has parts enough to make his singularities amusing. I dare say he was very happy in the visit you made him, both for the pleasure of your conversation, and from a little vanity: for though modes of singularity may give a man an air of designing to live alone, and of contempt of the world, I believe one may venture to say none are more desirous of regard and notice than those who affect to retire and be singular; they rather design their peculiarities for a badge of distinction, than a line of separation between them and society; and a man in low life may go ungartered or cross-gartered, who in another station would have been ambitious of a blue garter; and their instalment into a particular character is a matter of great toil. Lady Bolingbroke, who was the politest woman in the world, gratified the Dutchess of Queensberry with the title of Sa Singularité; her Grace was in raptures with the appellation; she had a more eager ambition to attain it than others have had to be called high

mightiness, or serene highness, or excellency, or even Sir Luke Schaub's title of Sa Sagesse: she had talked, she had eat, she had dressed, she had lived, for no other purpose but to be called Sa Singularité. I have always observed that these kind of people are desirous to make known to you their specific differences from the rest of mankind; I believe a friend of ours would be glad that when people see him on foot they could guess that were he on horseback, he would ride without a saddle. For his sake and the rest of those ingegious and generous mortals who exhibit new modes of living, I am sorry they meet with so little of the admiration they desire; but one would think the Furies were by Jupiter appointed the guardians of custom, for these rebels to its laws are pursued with hisses and stripes through the world; the fools laugh and the wise shake their heads, and they act a toilsome part without the reward of a plaudit. You are very good and kind to poor Crossby, for which I am much obliged to you. We had a report that the Duke had killed 3000 French, but he

is well off if he can keep on the defensive. I had a letter from Mr. Emin, that the Duke of Cumberland received him in the most gracious manner, and he is so pleased, I believe he thinks one step more will put him on the Persian throne. It is happy to be born of a hoping constitution; his day-dreams are very pleasant. I wish his patriot spirit was communicated to a dozen or two of our great men; it is a shame there should be more of it in the breast of an Armenian slave, born in bondage and nurtured in ignorance, than in those who count a long line of ancestors, and, by a liberal education, have before them the examples of all the patriots Greece and Rome produced; but the luxury of polite education spoils all its precepts. Adieu! my dearest, dinner is ready, and though I have less appetite to it than to write to you, I must attend. With the greatest love, esteem, and gratitude,

I am most affectionately yours,

E. MONTAGU.

From Mr. Stillingfleet to Mrs. Montagu.

Great Malvern, July the 18th, 1757.

MADAM,

AT length the hopes of having the honour to hear from you, and the impatience to be informed of your health, have prevailed over my aversion to writing, which is sometimes so great, that I can hardly expect my friends will forgive me.

I have been at Malvern about twelve days, where with difficulty I have got a lodging, the place is so very full; nor do I wonder at it, there being some instances of very extraordinary cures in cases looked on as desperate even by Dr. Wall, the physician who first brought the waters into vogue. I do not doubt but that the air and exercise, which at present is absolutely necessary here, the well being above two miles from the town, contribute very much towards restoring the health of the patients. The road is very fine,

and made on purpose for the convenience of the drinkers. It is on the side of a hill, which I am told is found, by exact mensuration, in some parts to be half a mile perpendicularly high above a wide plain that lies at the bottom. Towards the well the road ascends considerably, so that I imagine the end of it is not much less than half way up to the top. A gentleman in the neighbourhood has, at his own expense, made a walk a little above the well; this walk runs on a level for about 600 yards, winding with the breaks of the hill, and makes the noblest terrace I ever saw: the plain over which you look being bounded by some very fine hills, and on it lying, on one side Worcester, on the other Gloucester. The hill is fed by sheep, here and there some cattle graze, over-head I see my favourite bird the kite sailing, and all the while I tread on porphyry, the consciousness of which, you may guess, adds not a little to my satisfaction, when I consider that princes are proud to have a few pillars of this material. I have now done with the

well, and must come to the town, which is the chief place for the reception of strangers. This lies high on the side of the hill, and still on porphyry. The church, which stands a little lower than some parts of the town, was a priory, and is one of the finest and largest parish churches I know of. If you will excuse me, I will transcribe for the perusal of Mr. Montagu,* an epitaph on a tombstone there, written in monkish rhyme. It appears that the person buried under it was a mathematician, whose name I do not remember to have heard of, and yet, considering the age he lived in, in all probability it must be found in Vossius or Wolfius. The epitaph is as follows:

Philosophus dignus, bonus astrologus, Lotharingus;
Vir [illegible]us, ac humilis monachus, prior hujus ovilis
Hac jacet in cistâ, geometricus ac Abbacista,
Doctor Walcherus. Flet plebs, dolet undique clerus.
Huic lux prima mori dedit octobris seniori;
Vivat ut in cœlis exorat quisque fidelis. 1135.

We will, with your leave, madam, go a little lower, and here we find very de-

* Mr. Montagu was one of the first mathematicians of his day.

lightful dry meadows and corn fields, with now and then a spring that issues out of the side of the hill, a circumstance I forgot to mention in giving an account of the well-road. Not far below the church is a spring of the same nature with that at Tunbridge, which has also done great cures. It is weaker than that, but it is also purer and may be drunk with greater safety to some constitutions. A gentleman whom I went to visit at Ledbury t'other day, told me he received very great benefit by it about 30 years ago. I wish this place was nearer to London, for it seems to be exactly adapted to do you good. There cannot be better and pleasanter roads for a wheel-carriage than all about this place. There is a subscription going forward for building a large lodging-house near the well. At present there is only one old house in the town turned entirely to that purpose, which contains about 15 persons, and one large room in it, where once a week there is a sort of public breakfast and dinner. We have had one public tea-drinking and

card-playing in the afternoon, by particular invitation; to-day it will begin on another footing, and is to be weekly. Thus I have given you the best account I could of this place, which to you who are not quite out of the noise of the great world, may appear of very little importance, but to me who did not know till yesterday that the Queen of Prussia was dead, it seems to contain some things not wholly unworthy of notice. However this is the best entertainment I could furnish; and if you will permit your friends to trouble you with their letters, you must take the consequence. I am, with great respect,

Madam,

Your much obliged and humble servant,

BENJ. STILLINGFLEET.

To Benjamin Stillingfleet, Esq.

Sandleford, the 15th of Sept. 1757.

DEAR SIR,

You had so generously overpaid your reckoning in the pleasure your last letter gave me, I would have shewn a meritorious moderation in forbearing to trouble you so soon again, if I had not received a letter from the Dean of Exeter yesterday, which tells me Lord Lyttelton is extremely mortified that you did not go to Hagley when you left Malvern, and that he will be greatly disappointed if you forget the kind promise you made him of passing this season with him. The moderation I had professed at the beginning of my letter, might induce me to leave off here; but having so much regard to my friends' pleasure, you will allow me to have some indulgence to my own amusement. I hoped before this time Sandleford would have had a better secretary, for you must know, sir, Dr. Monsey

is fallen desperately in love with me, and I am most passionately in love with him; the darts on both sides have not been the porcupine's but the grey-goose quill. We have said so many tender things to each other by the post, that at last we thought it would be better to sigh in soft dialogue than by letter. We agreed to meet, and the rather, as all the lovers we had read of (and being in love with each other only du côté de l'esprit, you may suppose we woo by book) had always complained of absence as the most dreadful thing imaginable. He said, nay, he swore, he would come to Sandleford, and twice had named the day, but each time his granddaughter fell sick, and I know not whether he will keep the third appointment, which is for next Monday. These disappointments have made me resolve, and I really believe it will not be difficult to keep the resolution, never again to fall in love with a man who is a grandfather. In all other respects the Doctor is a perfect Pastor Fido, and I believe when we get to Elysium all the lovers who wander in the

myrtle groves there, will throw their garlands at our feet. Hero and Leander, Antony and Cleopatra, and others who formerly made some figure in Love's legends, will appear but vulgar sweethearts to us. I hear Mrs. Price is a little jealous of me, but I would advise her to make herself easy, for all young men are *volage*, and she will have her revenge when I shall in my turn complain

Of slighted vows and cold disdain;

but at present I think I reign absolute sovereign over his affections. The Gods take care of Cato, Emin is still alive and well in spite of all the hardships he suffers. I am sorry to hear people talk of another engagement; I wish, for fear of accidents, my peacock throne was coming with the other treasure from Stadt. Since you have found out my enthusiasm, I hope you will rank it with Peter the Great's love of polite arts, and Emin's passion for liberty: for, considering I am of the nation of women who are disinherited both by nature and custom of extraordi-

nary talents, it is as generous in me to admire them, as it was for a Russian bear to wish to polish his country, or a Persian slave to desire his countrymen may be free; nay, more so, for they could participate of the advantages they would give, and I cannot; and yet, as you imagine, I should be happy enough if I could protect excellence wherever and in whatever it was found. I would not, like the Queen of Sweden, fill my court with scavants and philosophers, for this is not the proper climate for them; but I would give them a good establishment in academies, and the rays of favour should shine on them if they inhabited the farthest degree of the poles. I have too much respect for science to expose it to the seductions of a court. When the chemist leaves his laboratory, and instead of enquiring into the secrets of nature is prying into those of the cabinet council, and the mathematician studies the law of nations instead of the laws of motion, they are ill employed, and business is ill performed. It was as absurd in Christina to turn her

philosophers into privy counsellors, as it would be to put Mr. Gray at the head of the tapestry manufacture because he has wove a web for Edward's line with the noblest images of poetry. I am not quite satisfied with what the Malvern waters have done for your health, but I acquit them of having spoiled your taste. I shall readily consent to revisit Mr. Morris's. I hardly want the temptation of your company to go thither. Experience is an infallible judge, and I believe you are very right in your choice of a situation for this climate. We have more occasion for wood to burn than to keep us from being burnt. I have not been able to prevail on Torri and his turtle to come to Sandleford, though a pair of lovers in London seem to be improperly situated. I expect my second brother, his wife, and two of my younger brothers here next week, and Mrs. Boscawen is to give me the pleasure, I may say happiness, of seeing her the beginning of October; but all this does not make me less regret that I have no hopes of seeing Mr. Stillingfleet.

I do not indeed hope to see him on the Persian throne, or giving laws to the East, but I know he sits on the summit of human virtue, and obeys the laws of Him who made that world the ambitious are contending for, and to such only my esteem pays homage, and as such I can with great truth assure him, I am with the highest esteem his most faithful

affectionate and obliged

humble servant

E. MONTAGU.

To Lord Lyttelton.

Sandleford, the 23d of October, 1757.

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordship presumes on the leisure of Hagley, when you desire me to write you a long letter, but you may repent of your gracious permission, if I can prevail upon an arm crippled by the rheumatism or cramp to travel over this sheet of paper.

I am sorry for the loss of Bewdley, but should be more concerned if I was assured the borough of Southwark and cities of London and Westminster were not in danger of being taken from us too. The condition of public affairs and the state of poor England is so uncertain, one cannot be deeply concerned about distant events. As long as the present mode of things shall subsist, a seat in parliament is of great consequence, and adds to the importance of those who can command one; so that it is not to be given up if it can be preserved; if not, one must patiently submit to the misfortune. I agree with your Lordship that reason is our lawful sovereign, and should decide every thing without control from, or appeal to, the passions; but Reason, like many a legitimate monarch often slumbers on his throne; while his viceroy, Opinion, a pert upstart, and as prompt as king Reason is slow and tardy, generally determines us: he is more impatient of contradiction than his master, and by airs of authority so imposes on us, that when we act by his suggestions we

fancy we are obeying the dictates of reason, while we really are governed by this maire du palais of the human mind.

I condole with you on our inglorious expedition. I find that noisy, thoughtless, brainless, many-headed monster, the multitude, charge our commanders with the blame, and I am told Mr. Potter wrote a letter to Mr. Allen, to tell him he was just come from Mr. Pitt, whom he found in the deepest sorrow upon the return of our fleet; and this great rhetorician does most strongly describe the dolours and complainings of the orator, his master: and his letter is left at Leake the bookseller's shop, to be perused by every one, and I doubt not but the mayor and aldermen of Bath, their wives, children, apprentices, and journeymen, have wept over it. Is not this kissing the dirty hem of the dirty garment of low and plebeian popularity? Were the private sentiments of ministers on public events ever left in stationer's shops for the perusal of every greasy customer, who could claim benefit of clergy? If the failure of this expedition

shall appear to be owing to the backwardness of our army, there will be no occasion for all this farce; if the project was rash, and ill advised, this mournful epistle will not excuse it. I should imagine our great men had some presentiment of immediate death, if I did not every day see them survive their expedients. I propose to write to my sister to-day for a copy of Mr. Potter's pathetic epistle, if, as I presume, they are current at Bath. We have regiments every day passing through Newbury from Portsmouth, and the officers all say the intended enterprize could never have been effected after the first night of their arrival, but seem to blame their commanders that it was not then attempted; but as Sir John Mordaunt and Mr. Conway are men of known and approved courage, I cannot suppose it could ever have been effected. A million of money laid out in the purchase of a heavy disgrace is grievous, but our able chancellor of the exchequer, with one of his well contrived lotteries, will soon recruit the treasury, and the patriot tears of

our minister will wash out the stain. I expect to find people in town in a very dejected state. I am so averse to thinking of these things that I cannot bear to read Voltaire's works, of which I had just got the new edition; every time England is mentioned it costs me a groan. I am not indeed a great admirer of Mr. Voltaire. I liked his account of the King of Sweden; but now he writes history as a philosopher, as too many philosophers do he leaves truth for system, and l'esprit de l'histoire, which he affects to give us, is trop alembiqué for me. I am diverted to find him taking all opportunities of giving modern poetry and history the preference to ancient. As to the common uses of life, the Public Advertiser is as much better than the Siécle de Louis Quatorze, as that is preferable to Livy, Thucydides, or Tacitus. It is more useful, perhaps, to know my host at the Blue Boar in Piccadilly died of eating too many oysters, than how Marshal Turenne was killed in the trenches; but to raise the genius and to mend the heart, one should place

in view examples of heroic virtue of which modern times are not so well furnished. One may perceive Voltaire has a mind to give a preference to our times for epic poetry, by which he means a compliment to his Henriade, at the expense of Homer and Virgil; which appears to me as if a school-boy should compare the hoverings and flutterings of his paper kite to the flight of the eagle. The Henriade is light matter born aloft by the puffing of a little rhyme, and will dance a while in the atmosphere of France: the Iliad is strong and animated, and on immortal wings soars to the very throne of Jove.

Your Lordship does not mean, surely, that I should pity Mrs. Payne for her fears of her death! I envy those whom happiness teaches to consider it is a terror.

You say your letters are not so amusing as Dr. Monsey's; I do not know any better letters than your's, but I will confess I have not a worse correspondent. Have you fixed the day for coming to

town, or does November itself look charming at Hagley?

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Hon. Mrs. Boscawen.

Sandleford, the 25th of October, 1757.

You are very obliging on every occasion, and, was it not excessively kind, as my letter, on Sunday morning, ended with wishing Mr. Boscawen in employment, you should begin a letter, which I received on Sunday evening, with telling me he was actually in commission? I am a little uneasy least the surprise should have hurt you; satisfy me in that matter, and my imagination will then sit down and weave laurel garlands for your husband's head, and I will too rejoice in the advantage which I hope his country will reap from his arms, but think me not ignoble, if I own, glory is but as bright moonshine, when compared to your welfare, and

think me not below the standard of true patriotism, if I confess, it is for the sake of such as you my country is a name so dear. I know you are too reasonable to wish Mr. Boscawen might avoid the hazards of his profession. The Duke of Marlbro', his kinsman, lived to old age, and survived, perhaps, all the cowards that were born on the same day: the accidents of life are more than the chances of war. Be not afraid, but commit it all to the great and wise Disposer of all events; a firm hope and cheerful reliance on Providence I do believe to be the best means to bring about what we wish, and that such confidence does it far better than all our anxious foresight, our provident schemes, and measures of security. I remember with sorrow and shame, I trusted much to a continual watching of my son; I would not have committed him to a sea-voyage, or for the world in a town besieged; I forgot at whose will the waves are still, and who breaketh the bow and knappeth the spear asunder. What was the reward of this confidence of my own

care and diffidence of his who only could protect him? Why, such as it deserved! I lost my beloved object, and with him my hopes, my joys, and my health, and I lost him too, not by those things I had feared for him, but by the pain of a tooth. Pray God keep you from my offence, and the punishment of it. I do not mean that you should be void of anxieties in times of hazard, but offer them up to God every night and sleep in peace, the same every morning, and rise with confidence. I will own that I have had a great desire to see Mr. Boscawen's name on most honourable record for some great victory before this war is at an end, that when the annals of our times are read, his countrymen, his friends, and his family, may glow with pride for him, while they must often for others blush with shame. I am much pleased with his Majesty's well placed confidence in Mr. Boscawen. The Duke, it seems is gone to plant cabbages. As soon as these great folks are disgusted they go into the country: the indignant statesman plants some trees,

upon which he wishes all his enemies hanged; his occupations are changed, but his passions not altered. The angry warrior rides a hunting, mais " le chagrin monte en croupe et galope avec lui," nor can the hounds and horn, " that cheerly rouse the slumb'ring morn," content the sense that wants, " th' ear-piercing fife and spirit-stirring drum." How often have these men who have accustomed themselves to the loud uproar of the world, reason to wish, as Pope says we should, if stunned by the music of the spheres, that Heaven had left them still,

The murmuring zephyrs and the purling rill.

Indeed it is a great misfortune to have set one's mind above the key of ordinary life; how often does it make these great performers play out of time and out of tune? I suppose Lord Halifax is going to be Secretary of State: he has behaved so well in his office, I wish him a greater, and that he may not be reduced to the pacific delights of rural life, for which I presume his mind may be a key too

high. I think one should put one's son apprentice to a gardener before he goes into the House of Commons, that when he is an unsuccessful politician he may retire to his garden with some pleasure and skill to boot. They are seldom so lucky as Boileau's antagonist, "qui de mauvais medecin devint habile architecte:" these chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place, generally make an absurd figure in the country. Pray make my compliments to your amiable guest. I expect a cargo of Morgans and good folks from Newbury to dine here; I always endeavour to depart the country in odour of civility, and I think I bid them adieu with easy grace and agreeable freedom which ever accompanies the movements of the heart. Not so did I take leave of my friend this day fortnight! pay me for that parting pang by bringing yourself to London in good health. I am,

my dear madam,

most affectionately yours,

E. MONTAGU.

To Miss Carter.

Hill-Street, the 6th of June, 1758.

WHAT must my dear Miss Carter think of the signs of brutal insensibility which I have given in not answering her obliging letter? As my heart has had no share in the omission, I have no apologies to make for it; no day has passed since you left us, in which I have not thought of you with esteem and affection; I look upon my introduction to your acquaintance as one of the luckiest incidents of my life, if I can contrive to improve it into friendship; this is, and has been the state of my mind, and I am proud of it: as to my conduct in the commencement of our correspondence, I am ashamed of it. I was ill when I received your polite and agreeable letter. I have ever since been drinking Islington waters, from which I receive some benefit, but with this inconvenience, that I am unable to write till late at night, and even then, not without head-

ache. The death of a relation of Mr. Montagu's in the North, which happened about a fortnight ago, with a large accession of fortune, has brought me the usual accompaniment of riches, a great deal of business, a great deal of hurry, and a great many ceremonious engagements. The ordering funeral ceremonies, putting a large family into mourning, preparing for a journey of 280 miles, and receiving and paying visits on this event, has made me the most busy miserable creature in the world. As the gentleman from whom Mr. Montagu inherits had been mad above 40 years, and almost bedridden these last ten; I had always designed to be rather pleased and happy, when he resigned his unhappy being and his good estate. I thought in fortune's, as in folly's cup, still laughed the bubble joy; but though this is a bumper, there is not a drop of joy in it, nor so much as the froth of a little merriment. As soon as I rise in the morning, my housekeeper, with a face full of care, comes to know what must be packed up for Newcastle; to her

succeeds the butler, who wants to know what wine, &c. is to be sent down; to them succeed men of business and money transactions; then the post brings twenty letters, which must all be considered, and some must be answered. In about a week we shall set out for the North, where I am to pass about three months in the delectable conversation of stewards, and managers of coal mines, and this, by the courtesy of avarice, is called good fortune, and I am congratulated upon it by every body I meet; while, in truth, like poor Harlequin in the play, I am acting a silly part dans l'embarras des richesses. I would not have troubled you with this detail but as part of my defence for not having written to you.

I can perfectly understand why you were afraid of me last year, and I will tell you, for you won't tell me; perhaps, you have not told yourself; you had heard I set up for a wit, and people of real merit and sense hate to converse with witlings; as rich merchant-ships dread to engage with privateers: they may receive damage

and can get nothing but dry blows. I am happy you have found out I am not to be feared; I am afraid I must improve myself much before you will find I am to be loved. If you will give affection for affection "tout simple," I shall get it from you, and even if you won't part with it without other good qualities, I hope to get them of you, if you will continue to me the happiness and advantage of your conversation. Our friend Emin is returned from the expedition without wounds and without laurels, which does not satisfy his aspiring soul; so he is going to that effective hero the King of Prussia, who does not make war on hulls of ships and magazines of sail-cloth and cordage. I proposed to have amused myself with learning Spanish as soon as I got to my quiet retreat in Berkshire, but this filthy lucre spoils all. I have the pleasure of hearing infinite commendations of Epictetus every day; from such as are worthy I taste a particular pleasure; from the multitude I take it in the gross, as it makes the sum of universal fame. Some

praises I heard a few days ago at the Bishop of London's, I put in the first class. When the learned have talked of the author I talk of the friend, and it is with the greatest pleasure and pride I speak or write myself dear Miss Carter's

most sincerely affectionate
and faithful friend,
E. MONTAGU.

To Benjamin Stillingfleet, Esq.

The 13th of June, 1758.

DEAR SIR,

IT has always been an abatement to my pleasure in corresponding with you that I was taking up the time you could employ to more useful purpose or agreeable amusement, and I could never find an hour in which my letter could properly steal in upon you. But even the unhappy have their moments, and I have at last found one most suitable to me; which is when you are in the cobler's library, after

Bunyan and Quarles, those classics of the artificers in leather, I think I may properly come in, and as I shall talk of heroes, talk of kings, armaments and navies, I expect to take the pas of the biographer of the Seven Champions, though I know his history is adorned with cuts. In the first place I congratulate you on our success in Africa; some account of it you will have seen in the newspapers, but I may add that we shall now serve ourselves with a certain gum necessary in staining cottons, for which we used to expend sixty thousand pounds a year. This affair was effected by an honest, rough sea captain whose name is Marsh, who owes his advancement in the navy to Mr. Boscawen. Prince Ferdinand's passing the Rhine is looked upon by the skilful in war, as a very great piece of generalship, and our gracious Sovereign is much delighted with the event. All English hearts are in palpitations for what this week is to bring forth; we expect hourly to hear of the success of our attack upon St. Malo's, of a battle expected to be

performed by that great master of the science of defence, the King of Prussia, and of what has happened at Louisbourg. Our troops landed at St. Malo's without opposition, but what dire contention may have fallen out since, we know not. There was a report yesterday that the place was carried with the loss of a thousand of our men, but thank God it was merely a rumour. So much for war, and war's alarms; as to our civil occurrences, they have been so boisterously carried, I need not change the tone of my narration. All the judges, the Lord Keeper, the Chief Justice, and the late Lord Chancellor gave their opinions against the habeas corpus bill. Lord Temple, much in wrath, insulted the judges in some of his questions; Lord Lyttelton warmly and sharply reproved him, upon which words rose so high, the House of Lords interposed. The last day of this bill Lord Mansfield and Lord Hardwicke spoke so fully to the matter, even the Tory lords, and those most violent in their wishes for it, declared they were convinced the new bill

was dangerous to liberty in many respects, in many absurd: so that, had there been a division, there would not have been four votes for it, but Mr. Pitt's party discreetly avoided a division. This affair has not set the legislative wisdom of the House of Commons in a very high light, but the great Mr. Beckford whom no arguments can convince, no defeat make ashamed, nor mistake make diffident, did on the motion for a vote of credit stand up in the House of Commons and say, he would not oppose that measure as he had an opinion of the two commoners in the administration, but in the peers that composed it, he had no confidence, and ran on in foul abuse of them, and then ended with a severe censure on the House of Lords in general. Lord Royston answered him, that this was unparliamentary, where personal, and indecent in regard to the House of Peers in general; to which Mr. Pitt answered with great heat, that he was sorry to hear such language from a gentleman who was to be a peer; he set forth the great importance and dignity of Mr.

Beckford personally, and above all the dignity and importance of an alderman, concluding it was a title he should be more proud of than that of a peer. This speech has enraged the Lords, offended the Commons, and the city ungratefully say, it was too gross. Those who wish well to this country, and consequently to an union of parties at this juncture, are sorry for these heats; it is well if they do not unsolder the union. Lady F. Williams is set out for Hampton Court to day.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

From Mr. Stillingfleet to Mrs. Montagu.

Foxley, June the 30th, 1758.

DEAR MADAM,

AT length I am resolved to sit down and acquit myself of a debt, which I have too long owed. If you could possibly be in earnest when you talk about interrupting my studies or amusements by your letters,

I would tell you that I never should spend my time so agreeably, were it not for the thought of answering them, which always gives me anxiety, knowing how incapable I am of entertaining you.

The scene is much mended since I left Cheltenham, for what with the conversation of the master and mistress here, the amusements which the children afford, music and botany, I find the time passes very quick, and I am not obliged to recur to my pis-aller, that most pernicious of all entertainments, reading. I shall endeavour the rest of my life to follow the sage advice of the sagest of all moderns, in the opinion of Torri, viz, the Marquis Rinuccini, who with a sneer used to ask his friends, if they found themselves the happier for poring over books. Torri was at once struck with the solidity of this question, and, from that time, determined to become his disciple, and, to show how strongly he imbibed his master's principles, he is at present, for want of other amusement, employed in learning the mysteries of cock-fighting; knowing very

well if he were once to give way to that evil custom of reading, he might run the risque of forfeiting all the advantages he has hitherto had above those restless people who are always hunting after knowledge. I know you will despise such doctrines as these, and the more so as it is a known fact that people grow desirous of heaping, the greater their store is, but I am convinced that nothing contributes so much to happiness as quietism in knowledge, whatever it may do in religion; and if you could once prevail on yourself to be of the Marquis's sect, I would answer for it in a few years you might bid adieu to physic. This is so clear that I will venture to refer it to Monsey himself, whether I am in the right or no, though he is interested in the case, as he would see you seldomer if you were quite robust.

I had wrote thus far when I was interrupted by a philosopher, very skilful in botany, who came here to be my guide about the hills in search of plants. I call him a philosopher, not on account of

his knowledge, which I think seldom produces that kind of creature, nor on account of his voluntary poverty, which is often the effect of spleen, but on account of a certain simplicity and benevolence of temper which is the choicest gift of heaven. He is above 70 years old, and has all the vigour and cheerfulness of a young man. He lives in a cottage entirely by himself, dresses his meat when he eats any, which is but seldom, never sleeps above 4 hours in the 24, never lies on a bed of the usual form, but makes use of herbs of various kinds with only two blankets for that purpose. He will stand up to the middle in water in the month of March, fishing hours together; and thinks it contributesto his health; and will pass the day without eating or drinking, without being hungry or dry, by the help of a pebble in his mouth. His time is generally employed in prescribing to the lower sort of farmers and poor; from the latter he takes neither fee nor reward, and puts the former to no expense for drugs, for he uses none but what grow in the fields or his

garden. In short, he is such a sort of man that if there were a nation of such, I should join with that ingenious savage, Rousseau, and prefer them to the old Greeks in their most polished state. I must just tell you, to finish his character, that this same philosopher has seen the world, and once kept race-horses and running footmen, though he never had a fortune for such expenses. However, he was worth something, and lost the remains of his fortune, which was about £600., in superintending mines for a nobleman who honestly left him in the lurch. He tells me he has not the least desire to be owner of a larger sum than what may serve to keep him in his last illness and bury him.

Mr. Price is far from well, so that we have yet made no visits, but I imagine we shall soon make one to Lady Coningsbey. There have passed some messages on both sides, by which I find they are well, and so fond of the place, that it is reported they will pass the winter at Hampton-Court.

I am, &c. &c.

B. STILLINGFLEET.

To the Hon. Thomas Lyttelton.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE often check'd my inclination to write to you, while you were at Eton, for fear of calling you off from your school exercises; but as you are now in a situation, where there is a vacancy of business and pleasure, I do not feel the same scruples, may write you long letters, and expect full answers to them. However, I will be so far reasonable, that if you send me a card, to signify that you are engaged for the week, or month, to Cicero or Livy, it will be a more valid excuse to me, than if, on inviting you to dinner, you told me you were engaged to a beauty or a duchess. —My love for you, my hope of you, my wishes for you, and all my expectations from you, unite in giving me a respect for your time, and a deep concern for your employment of it. The morning of life, like the morning of the day, should be

dedicated to business. On the proper use of that "sweet hour of prime," will depend the glory of your noon of life, and serenity of its evening. Give it, therefore, my dear Mr. Lyttelton, to the strenuous exertion and labour of the mind, before the indolence of the meridian hour, or the abated fervour of the exhausted day renders you unfit for severe application.—I hope you will not (like many young men, who have been reckoned good scholars at Eton and Westminster) take leave of it there, and fall into the study of les belles lettres, as we call our modern books, I suppose from the same courtesy as the weakest part of the rational species is styled the fair sex, though it can boast of few perfect beauties, and perhaps the utmost grace and dignity of the human form is never found in it. As you have got a key to the sacred shades of Parnassus, do not lose your time in sauntering in the homely orchards or diminutive pleasure gardens of the latter times. If the ancient inhabitants of Parnassus were to look down from their

immortal bowers on our labyrinths, whose greatest boast is a fanciful intricacy, our narrow paths, where genius cannot take his bounding step, and all the pert ornaments in our parterres of wit, they would call them the moderns' folly; a name the wise farmer often gives to some spot from whence the Squire has banished the golden harvest, to trim it up for pleasure with paltry ornaments and quaint conceits.—I should be sorry to see you quit Thucydides for Voltaire, Livy for Vertot, Xenophon for the bragging Memoirs of French Marshals, and the universal Tully, and deep Tacitus for speculative politicians, modern orators, and the dreamers in universities or convents.—I will own that in natural philosophy and some of the lesser branches of learning the moderns excel; but it would not be right for a person, in your situation, to strike into any of the private paths of science. The study of history will best fit you for active life. From history you will acquire a knowledge of mankind, and a true judgment in politics; in moral,

as well as physical enquiries we should have recourse to experiment.—As to the particular study of eloquence I need hardly exhort you to it, for eloquence is not only the most beautiful of all the daughters of wisdom, but has also the best dowry; and we may say of her, as Solomon did of her mother, riches and honours are in her right hand.—Elevation of sentiment, and dignity of language are necessary to make an orator; modern life and modern language will hardly inspire you with either. I look upon virtue as the muse of eloquence, she inspired the philippics of the Grecian and Roman orator, her voice awakened Rome, slumbering in the snares of Catiline. Public spirit will teach the art of public speaking better than the rules of rhetoric, but, above all things, the character of the orator gives persuasion, grace, and dignity to the oration. Integrity of manners gives the best testimony of sincerity of speech. If you form your conduct upon the sacred book which gives rules far more perfect than human wisdom

could contrive, you will be an honour to religion, a support to your country, and a blessing to your family. It may seem strange that I have last mentioned what should be first regarded. The Bible alone will make a good man; human learning, without the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of him, which is understanding, will produce but a poor and inconsistent character; but duties are enlarged and multiplied by the power and circumstances with which God has intrusted us, and in which he has placed us. Your talents and situation will fit you for public trusts; it is a duty in you to qualify yourself for them; to give your virtue every strength and then to employ it in the service of your country in its most important interests, true religion, and good government. I hope you will excuse my having said so much, that has the air of advice to one who wants it so little, but young people are apt to be prodigal of time, because they think they have so many

years before them; but if life be long, the season for improvement is short.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Lord Lyttelton.

Darlington, Aug. 6th.

MY LORD,

I AM set down to obey your Lordship's kind commands, to let you know how I performed my northern expedition. I am now about 25 miles short of Newcastle, having travelled above 250 miles since last Tuesday, and am better to-night than I was when I left London, so I will no longer endure, that Dr. Monsey shall call me flimsey animal, puny insect, and other such opprobrious names. I have had such a surfeit of being in a post-chaise that I have not made many excursions to see the fine places that lay in the road.

In my way to Nottingham I went to see Sir Robert Clifton's, which appears to me, for beauty of prospect, equal to any place I ever saw. You are led to it from the turnpike-road by a fine terrace on the side of the Trent. From a pavilion in the garden you see the town and castle of Nottingham, standing in the most smiling valley imaginable, in which the Trent serpentizes in a most beautiful manner. The town of Nottingham resembles Windsor, and the country about it has the same character, but the Trent at Sir R. Clifton's is finer than the Thames at Windsor. I return your Lordship many thanks for having lent me so agreeable a companion as Antonio de Solis, whom I infinitely respect for the solidity of his genius. By the simplicity of his narrations, the dignity of his speeches, and the good sense of his reflections, he has put himself in the rank of Thucydides and Tacitus. He has written a history, which in the hands of a man of less judgment, was in danger of placing its author on the shelf with Scudery and the writers of romance. It

is lamentable to see a man of his discernment in other matters, so blind in the great concern of religion. He exults in the triumph over idolatry, when Cortez demolishes an idol to place the image of the Virgin Mary in its place. I agree with him so far, as to imagine there was some supernatural assistance given to the Spaniards in this enterprise. The character of Cortez is not among the ordinary productions of nature, but composed of those various and contrary qualities, that are requisite to bring about great events. Daring courage and consummate prudence, a character of frankness and magnamity, with occasional dissimulation and artifice, and all these, in the highest degree, make a most rare and uncommon composition; and I am apt to look on these extraordinary persons as inspired. I think Cortez equal in courage to Alexander. It is easy to find valour for a day's occasion, and vigilance for a short danger; but to live with a few friends in a vast and populous country of enemies, for so long a time, where labour was never

crowned with rest, nor victory with security, seems to me the most formidable of all undertakings. When he takes Montezuma prisoner, I am as much amazed as his Mexican majesty. The arguments the historian makes him use to prevail on Montezuma to surrender himself, are admirably fitted to an imperial ear. He respects nothing in the emperor but his vain pride and love of a respectful address; and it seems he understood the monarch, who could endure the loss of liberty better than an omission of ceremony. Forms of respects were established to guard prerogatives; but I know not why, they soon grow dearer to those accustomed to them, than the very rights they were invented to protect. I cannot help thinking the Belle Marine the happiest woman that ever existed; she seemed to have matched herself with a superior species; and I figure to myself how her heart must exult, when she saw her consort (for I suppose she looked on her connection with Cortez as a marriage) leading captive that monarch, whom none

of her fellow subjects dared look in the face. I am anxious to know what becomes of the fair one, when Cortez has no longer occasion for her as an interpreter. I have but just finished the first volume, for much of the road has been too rough to allow me to read, and at the inns I generally write letters, and I fear your Lordship by this time thinks very long ones; but I could not help telling you, how much your book has contributed to my amusement in this long journey. You will excuse all the absurdities I may have expressed, and the vile scrawl in which they are written, for neither my head or hand are very steady after so long a journey. I know your aversion to writing letters, but hope you will let me hear you got safe into the country.

I am your Lordship's,
most obliged
and faithful humble servant,
E. M.

To the Hon. Thomas Lyttelton.

Aug. 27.

DEAR SIR,

THOUGH I have long owed you a letter I would not write to you till I could give you some account of this country. I am yet acquainted only with the surface of it, which is the least valuable part of Northumberland. The ingenious inventions and incessant industry of mankind have contrived to bring up the riches which seemed to have been placed out of their reach. The mechanism of the engines, and their operations in the coal pits, are well worth observation, and before I leave this country I design to make myself acquainted with them: at present I can only describe to you the general character of the country. Our world above ground affords the greatest variety imaginable, but this diversity does not arise from an assemblage of all that is hills were some of them adorned with

beautiful in nature, but, from a mixture of the cultivated and the rude, the pleasant and the horrid. I dined yesterday at a gentleman's house in the bishopric of Durham about 15 miles from hence; the first four miles of our journey was through a wild country full of moors, under which lie the coal mines; the river Tyne gave some ornament to the scene, and the frequent cottages on the moors, which are built for the pitmen, take off something of the solitariness of the desert; these moors are not totally uninhabited, but they look unblest; the plough, harrow, and the vestiges of agriculture are not to be traced there, and one pities the inhabitants of such an ungrateful soil, till one recollects that the mines reward the labour of the industrious in full as ample, though not so agreeable a manner, as arable lands. The rest of our journey was through a rich corn country, where the harvest was going on very happily; the river Wear enlivened the valley, and gave cheerfulness and softness to the prospect, the distant woods, others shagged with rocks, but

even this fine country was not without a mixture of moors, and I think a person of taste would not throw them out of the landscape; though they sadden, they dignify the scene. I saw nothing in my progress that entirely displeased me, but a great monument of human folly. We passed by Hylton Castle, a most noble edifice, and well situated. It was granted by King Athelstan to an ancestor of the late proprietor's with a great estate, it passed down through many ages to the late Baron Hylton, who spent his whole fortune in the purchase of the meanest pleasures in the meanest company: a few years ago, going home drunk, he overturned his chaise, and finished a life intemperance had made scandalous, and prodigality uneasy. The remains of his estate, and this ancient and noble castle hardly suffice to satisfy his creditors. One cannot help grieving to see a family, for whom the changeful destinies seem to have had so constant and unusual a respect, overthrown at once, not by the noble strokes of fate, the assaults of

foreign enemies, or convulsions of civil contentions: but sunk by brutal vice and senseless prodigality. I knew the late master of Hylton, he was good-humoured and void of ill intention; but Nature made a mistake when she set him on two legs; he would have pursued his instincts better upon four, and honest bruin would not have been molested by creditors, nor have forfeited his paternal den. After dinner I ferried over the river Wear to Sunderland, a good sea-port town. They are making a new pier there, which is done at the expense of the coal owners who have mines near the Wear. I got a very pleasant walk on the sea shore; several ships were sailing out of the harbour, fraught only with the comforts and conveniences of life, they carry out coals and salt, and bring home money. I question whether those who carry out death, and bring home glory, are concerned in so good merchandize, though they account their occupation most honourable. On Thursday I went to see Lumley Castle; it is a noble habitation,

but so modernized by sash windows, and other fashionable ornaments, I admired it only as a good house. There are many family pictures in the hall; a succession of sixteen Lumleys, all martially accoutred, the Lumley arms on their shields; their figure and attitudes make them look like Scaramouches. They hang so high, I could not read the inscriptions, but, I imagine, it is intended one should suppose each picture was taken from the life; but, from the dress and character, I am sure they have been done by one hand from the genealogical tree. There are many old pictures in the house, and many fair testimonies of the ancient nobility of the family, but I cannot pass them the sixteen generations. There are large plantations of firs at Lumley Castle, a large park behind the castle, to the front a good prospect, and the river Wear at a due distance. I will not fatigue you with more of my excursions at present. We began this week to return some of our visits. When I have satisfied forms, I shall then indulge myself in some rambles to see the more moun-

tainous parts of the country. I was very ill last week, but am much better. I believe my illness was owing to the constant fatigue of a great deal of company. Society without friendship is troublesome. I could like very well to pass a summer here, in such pleasures as the country and solitude can give, but when I cannot have my friends with me, I wish to be alone. Pray, let me know, how you like Hampton Court. Please to tell Lord Lyttelton, that Mr. Emin is gone to the King of Prussia, but, that should my Armenian friend deserve a garter in his Prussian Majesty's Ordre du Merite, I shall not be convinced he is equal to Cortez, my Spanish hero, who was born to give distinctions, not to receive them from the hands of another; but any man of a second order is well placed with the King of Prussia, and I am glad Emin is with him. I am

dear Mr. Lyttelton's
most affectionate friend,
and faithful humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To Miss Elizabeth Carter.

October 20, 1758.

My dear Miss Carter, I dare say, has been making excuses to herself on my behalf, and imagined many reasons for my not having thanked her for the favour of her letter. I suppose, you think my time has been spent in travelling about a country, where every thing is new to me; indeed, my dear madam, I have been at the verge of that country, from whose bourne no traveller returns; the accident that brought me thither is so strange, I shall relate it.* I should not trouble you with all this detail, if it were not to set forth the true reasons of my omitting so long to keep up a correspondence, which I assure you gives me the highest pleasure. I hope, I have not thereby forfeited any part of

* Mrs. Montagu was near losing her life, by having eau de luce poured into her throat, during a fainting fit; the detail is omitted.

your friendship, which I value as it deserves; I have made use of the strongest expression, but you will not take the force of it; let some of your friends explain it. How kind and how cruel were you in saying you wish for my company on the seashore! I cannot express to you how impatient a wish it raised in me to have that pleasure. You would give ballast to an imagination that carries too much sail, and your judgment, like a skillful pilot, would direct its course. When we returned from our evening's walk, how glad should I be, to be conducted by you through Livy's noble history. It seems to me, as if the genius of Rome had guided his pen, resolved, before it abandoned that great state to a race of tyrants, to record its rise and progress to the summit of human greatness and glory. Livy seems to have at once possessed the virtue and gravity of the earliest ages of the commonwealth, the dignity of its highest prosperity and the politeness of the Augustan age, equally fit to record the severe virtue of the ancient Brutus, the

martial deeds of Scipio, and to set forth the stupendous greatness of an empire, formed by a long succession of victorious chiefs. All the muses assisted so great an undertaking. Every part seems to have had its particular muse. He was always inspired; other historians seem to have had only a partial inspiration. We must allow too, he had the noblest subject: after reading the Roman history, every thing appears little. Even the states of Greece seem like the republic of ants, written by a good naturalist; there is a great deal of political economy, and one admires their spirit, their activity, &c. but compared to Rome, it is but a mole-hill. One wonders indeed, how so much was transacted in so narrow a space. I think I see you a little offended at my simile. I do not mean to be unjust to your beloved Greeks; I will own, that, when one sees one of their little states opposing and keeping at bay the forces of the great king, and, in spite of such a threatening power, cultivating the fine arts, and carrying the human mind to its utmost

possible degree of perfection, they appear like those superior intelligences, whom we suppose to effect things beyond mortal ability by mere spiritual powers, without the gross aid of common matter. We consider their great influence, and admire the force of their agency the more, as we can less ascribe it to ordinary means. One thing too I must observe in favour of the Grecians. Uncorrupted virtue, unsoftened valour, untainted innocence subsisted, among some individuals, with all the politeness of manners, acuteness of wit, and refinement of art: I know not such an example among the Romans. As soon as they were polite, they were voluptuous. The muses of Greece, those sacred virgins who *there* excited to noble deeds, grew harlots at *Rome*, and corrupted their youth. If one would shew how great a creature man is, one must exhibit some of the individuals of Greece; if one shew how great men grow in communities and their united force, one must set forth the commonwealth of Rome. I agree with you, in admiration of Xenophon, and wish I

could partake with you the pleasure of reading his own words. His eloquence seemed to have all the power fable ascribes to the music of Orpheus. I agree with you, in excusing the superstition, which is often objected to him. I have great indulgence to superstition, in those, who wanted the light of revelation; the best and wisest men must have been most liable to it: they would be most desirous to know the will of the supreme Being, and most convinced of the advantage of fulfilling it: they would seek, therefore, to find it out, and not having any true light, every glimmering ray, whatever pretended to reveal it, would be attended to. Justly odious is superstition to us, as it caused us to leave the sacred guide of the scriptures to follow our own perverse and idle fancies, and indeed it is directly the opposite to Xenophon's conduct, who was desirous to quit his own suggestions, for the least intimation of the divine will. I have never read Aristotle's Ethics, and after what you have said never shall do it. One might as well study a treatise of navigation

before the use of the compass was found out, as a system of ethics without revelation. Natural reason may point out some course, and shew where the great rocks lie, but we must have the will of God for our direction, if we would constantly steer the proper course.

I am flattered to find my opinion of Corneille has always agreed with your's. I will allow he is a poet, but I deny his dramatic talents: he does not possess the familiarity of dialogue, nor the art of realizing characters. Moliere brings the statue of the Commandant upon the stage to terrify Don Juan. I would have had Corneille to compose his pieces of the statues of certain great Romans, for, indeed he gives us them in stone; their air, their shape, their features are expressed, but they are not animated; they are not men, they are mere images. How different are the tragedies of our divine Shakspeare! Theatrical compositions should strike, in some measure, the whole audience. Shakspeare makes use of a figurative language, which the critic takes in

the noble, the mechanic in the familiar sense. The haberdasher of small wares understands his noble men, and Forcible Feeble, the woman's tailor, is warmed and animated by his heroes, as much as his grace, or the general in the side-box. But what, indeed, is Hecuba to them, or they to Hecuba, if, in language too fine to be understood, she tells the pit and gallery of her misfortunes, and to the politer audience she only utters some sentences of maternal love, and some general complaints of the changefulness of fortune, without anything that makes you see it is not only a mother and a queen, but the individual Hecuba that is wretched. It is the particular grief, the appropriated sorrow that touches the spectator, it is to the individual the interest belongs. I do not know how far my idle comments may make you repent having mentioned these authors, but I assure you, what you said of them required no apology, it will always give me pleasure as well as instuction to partake of your studies. Your letter found me on my sick bed. I had

but one eye capable of assisting me in reading it, but I assure you it raised my spirits, and was a better cordial than my doctor could have given me: I had been long deprived of the pleasure of wandering amongst the aromatics of Parnassus; when I have my full range I only idly sport there like the butterfly; you are the honey bee, and extract the precious essence, and I desire you would continue to send some of your honey. I assure you none of the authors you mention ever said what edified me so much, as your resignation to sickness, to ordinary avocations, and the demands of courtesy; to these you can patiently give up the hours in which you could acquire knowledge and extend your fame. I find there is no temptation specious enough to deceive you. I used to think it very noble and great in me when I was angry and peevish at being deprived of improvement: I thank you for this better lesson, and see my fault was only covered with some fine words. Business still confines me to these northern regions. I please

myself with the hope of seeing you in town; let me know when you propose to be there: I hope you will be near Hill-street. May all happiness attend you every where!

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Benjamin Stillingfleet, Esq.

Carville, October 22nd, 1758.

DEAR SIR,

I FLATTER myself the time approaches when we may confer about our summer's rambles with more liberty and ease than by pen and ink: they will make a good winter's tale by the fire-side, as the excursions of youth supply the idle prate of old age. Your story will have as great advantages over mine as the travels of a man of taste, whom curiosity has led through delicious countries, have over the dry journal of a trader, whom desire of gain has conducted to places of traffic,

without regard to climate or soil. Northumberland falls short of Wales in point of natural beauty; its rude visage has been often scarred by the weapons of war, and you can hardly travel a mile without being made to recollect the Romans were our imperious masters, and the Scotch our inveterate foes. Carville* is just at the end of the Picts' wall, it makes part of our enclosures, and we have a Roman altar in the stables. The din of war has so frightened the rural deities, that even the long time that has passed since the union with Scotland, has not brought them to make their residence with us. Pan, Ceres, and Pomona, seem to neglect us, and we are under the dominion of the god of mines. There is a great deal of rich land in this country, but agriculture is ill understood. The great gain made by several branches of the coal trade has turned all attention that way. Every gentleman in the county, from the least to the greatest, is as solicitous in the

* Mr. Montagu had hired Carville while his own house was repairing.

pursuit of gain as a tradesman in Cheapside. The conversation always turns upon money; the moment you name a man, you are told what he is worth, the losses he has had, or the profit he has made by coal mines. As my mind is not naturally set to this tune, I should often be glad to change it for a song from one of your Welch bards: they would find poor encouragement here, for where avarice reigns there is little regard to heroic deeds or sacred song; neither the achievements of the hero celebrated, nor the raptures of the bard would be attended to. I should wish to understand the Welch bards, who, by what you say, appear to be the natural sons of Homer, and inherit his spirit, though they are not heirs to his cultivated lands in Parnassus; perhaps they have more of his fire, and as much of his air by snatches as his legitimate posterity, whom discipline, more than disposition, has trained to imitation. The Welch loved fighting and feasting, and the bards enlivened the feast and immortalised the hero; I should suppose that

wherever the spirit of a people is very martial the policy of princes and the tenderness of friends and relations, should unite in endeavouring to preserve the memory and example of the brave, by recording verse, or imitative sculpture. You say you admire the works of these poets the more, as they were untutored by the Greeks and Romans; but surely they were under the influence of Rome's great tutor, the love of glory.

I am glad to hear the dean of Exeter and you are engaged in considering the antiquities of Wales. Northumberland can afford good amusement to an antiquarian, and I shall hope at some time to get you both hither. Mr. Montagu has an estate at Routchester, which would afford much entertainment of that kind; he has a share also of Jarrow, where lived and died the venerable Bede. I have no skill in antiquities, but I proposed a great deal of pleasure in seeing all the natural beauties in this part of the world; but my disaster put an end to all my schemes. I had a very kind invitation from Mrs.

Lowther to pass some time at Lowther hall; I am told it is the finest place in the north; I believe I should rather have admired than coveted it; grandeur without softness, pleases me in a place no better, than dignity without courtesy in a man or woman. Lowther is much greater than Gibside, which is too great for me; I love woods, but I do not desire such forests, that you would rather expect to be entertained in the evening with the howling of wolves and yelling of tygers, than with Philomel's love-laboured song. Such a place is a fit pasture for Nebuchadnezzar; pride and tyranny may delight in it; I would divide the glebe with the husbandman. Useful Ceres, though she does not set up for a deity of taste, enlivens and embellishes a rural scene more than all the arts and sciences. By Dr. Monsey's last letter, I should think it possible he may be with you by this time; if he is, tell him I desire the delights of Hagley may not make him forget his poor correspondent at Carville. I flattered myself with the hopes of leaving

this place by the end of this month, but business proceeds with a more deliberate pace than wishes; so the good doctor may continue the charitable intercourse of letters till he hears further.

I am, with perfect esteem, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

---

*To Dr. Monsey.**

Hill-street, March 8th, 1757.

DEAR DOCTOR,

That is, because you have made me well.

DEAR SIR,

Because you make me laugh.

I OBSERVE that it is the fashion of the times, when any work of wit and ingenuity appears, to follow it with absurd

* Dr. Monsey was physician to Lord Godolphin, who lived at Gogmagog-hill, near Cambridge.

The following letters to Dr. Monsey are from a copy made, by direction of Dr. Monsey, of his own and Mrs. Montagu's letters. The Editor does not possess the originals of Mrs. Montagu's. They should have been earlier inserted, but the copy was mislaid at the time.

criticisms; and thus the gentle queen of dullness gathers a poll-tax even of you beaux-esprits. I am determined that you shall pay double taxes, as Papists do for their disaffection, and I will begin the criticism even with the date of your letter. Pray, Sir, why Hogmagog hills instead of Gogmagog hills? by what right or what might have you dispossessed the great giants? if, indeed, you have vanquished them in single combat and deposed them, it is an adventure worth mentioning to your friends, in particular Mr. Emin would be glad to know by what art military it was achieved; he would, perhaps, choose to make a campaign with you, rather than with the King of Prussia, who may not gain so complete a victory over the Gogs and Magogs leagued against him. As to the first article of your letter, in which you imagine you have cured an incurable disease, I look upon that to be owing to a sudden elevation of your vanity on your victory over the giants. Pray come to town and leave the poor man to depart in peace. I do not believe

our friend Mr. Stillingfleet is more attached to the lilies of the field than to the lilies of the town, who toil and spin as little as the others, and like the former are better arrayed than Solomon in all his glory. I assure you our philosopher is so much a man of pleasure, he has left off his old friends and his blue stockings, and is at operas and other gay assemblies every night; so imagine whether a sage doctor, a dropsical patient, and a bleak mountain, are likely to attract him. It is usual for people in retirement to grow proud and self-sufficient, and fancy the world should come to them, but believe me, much easier will you find it to come to town to a dozen friends, than to get one to come to you; so order the post-chaise and come away. I speak this from a friendly desire of your company; I want none of your medical art, I have been in perfect health ever since I saw you. I had left off the noble tincture and the excellent decoction before you wrote to me, because I was as well as a person of any delicacy could wish to be.

I have not lived lately like the scholar and the philosopher you imagine me. I find I can be silly without being sick, though I cannot be sick without being silly; I have gone wherever two or three fools were gathered together, to assemblies, visiting days, &c. &c. Pray let me have the benefit of your leisure hours. When you have given your patients a sleeping draught, write me an enlivening epistle; so shall dulness and drowsiness get nothing by you; I would have you to know, that though my day includes twenty-four idle, it has not one leisure hour; sufficient to the day is the impertinence thereof. I suppose that you expect I should tell you the politics of the day, but to own the truth, the ministry do not trust me with their secrets, for which reason alone I do not tell them to any one. Mr. Pitt's toe is prisoner to the gout, but don't be frightened, he is not silly when he is sick, as some of your friends are; he assured the House of Commons he is not, and that his mind stands a tip-toe when he cannot set a

foot to the ground. There have been great efforts to save Mr. Byng; the House of Commons pass'd a bill, and the Lords on their wool packs deliberated whether they should pass one, to enable one of the court martial to tell something of great importance to his Majesty in regard to the admiral, for absolving him of his oath of secrecy; but as not only the power of speaking, but likewise the having something to say was necessary to make such an Act of Parliament useful, it was asked at the bar of the House of Lords whether he had any thing of importance to reveal? and as he did not say he had, the Lords very properly determined not to pass a bill to make a man speak who had nothing to say. I met your friend Mrs. Evelyn the other day; she looks ill, and is gone into the country for amendment; for my part I desire nothing of trees but the bark at this time of the year. The Duke of Grafton is in danger of dying of the conquences of his fall, he is lethargic: I should think a lethargy must be a good way of dying,

when sleep gently draws the curtain before death puts out the light. Mr. Gataker goes on prosperously with his experiments, and the deadly night-shade in skillful hands will prove a salutary plant. As you are in the country and have time to moralize, you may run over in your imagination how often in the moral world affliction and disappointment, and all the tribe of deadly night-shade procure the health of the soul, when virtue and religion temper them. I thank you for all the wit and the wisdom, and the Latin and the Greek in your letter; for though I have no skill in these matters, it looks as if you thought I had, and the presumption does me some honour. You may possibly be mistaken in supposing that I shall not shew your letter, lest it should make people imagine I understand Latin; for I think they will rather believe you do not understand me, and no disparagement to your understanding neither; for, as Pope says, "true, no meaning puzzles more than wit." I have not got my thimbles on; I think they will do me more

honour in the country, for in London the ladies will not know what they are usually designed for. I desire you to sit down the moment you receive this, and write me a letter from Gogmagog hill, or come to London and shew cause why you do not: without blow or menace, secret fraud or open violence, I subscribe myself,

Dear Sir,

your most affectionate friend, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill-street, 9th April, 1757.

DEAR SIR,

I AM to thank you for two epistles; one from Newmarket, where, methinks, you were oddly associated, or to speak in the language of the place, strangely matched with gamesters, grooms, and horses; when you wrote your second letter from the bed-side of a patient, your doctorship was

more seemly and suitably situated. I shall first answer your first letter, not merely in respect to its priority of existence, but from the usual desire of recurring as late as possible to serious reflections and the remembrance of mortality. I cannot imagine why you should send the bark, which has had so wonderful an effect on my complexion (vide Duchess of Leeds) to the tanners, merely to the preparation of wash leather gloves, and make into foolish bodkins that steel which gives so sharp an edge to the darts of my two little grey eyes, of whose dead-doing might you seem to have a high opinion. I am sorry you played truant in regard to Admiral Boscawen; I would have sent his press-gang after you, if I could have guessed where it would have found such a vagrant: however, I have enquired how you might apply for the money, and they tell me if you produce a note of hand or other testimonial of the debt to the person who pays the crew their wages, you may get your money, if your debtor permits it, if not, you must use such means

as the law prescribes for debts, viz. a writ and a bailiff. If your lieutenant can find another lieutenant that is fool enough to change his captain for the proud Scotch captain, he may be relieved from his thraldom. You see I have asked your questions, but whether with the prudence you required I know not; for it is easy to give an infusion of the bark, but for an infusion of prudence, I know not how it is to be administered; if offered in the vehicle of advice, it is so nauseous one cannot swallow it, and rolled up in a hint and gilt with civility, or levigated to an impalpable powder, it seldom takes effect. I thank you for your incomparable doggrel; but I apprehend from the metre, Lord Godolphin's coach-springs are not so good as you pretended, though some allowance must be made for the roughness of the road and the badness of our pavements. I assure you I never made a fool of a wit in my life; every boarding-school girl can do it; my nobler ambition was to make wits of fools, and I was encouraged in the attempt by a fable of Mr. Dryden's;

but lord! how poets lie! I was long ago convinced it is not to be done, and so long ago laid aside all endeavours to turn men's heads. I had some inclination to send your second letter to Dr. Young, that he might answer your night thoughts. You paint the scene as very solemn, and indeed this last page of your idle tale of life is sad enough; your mind wears the true philosophic colour, for indeed, to suit the medley we are to act, as that great philosopher master Jacques says, "motley is the only wear:" adversity and prosperity, sickness and health, success and disappointment, make the chequered habit of the harlequin man; we are born to die, and die to be born again, and the fool that laughed, and the other fool that cried, were neither of them true philosophers in my opinion; there is hardly cause for mirth or melancholy in any thing that passes on our stage. He that tops his part like Mr. Garrick, whether it be Abel Drugger the tobacconist, or a great emperor, will leave the world with applause, and at last have a great benefit,

After having often fought with death, when he at last shall fight with you, may you enter the combat with the hopes of a Christian, and the fortitude of a philosopher! I thank you kindly for giving me Christian burial; but in laying a marble stone over me, you put yourself to more trouble than I shall give my executors; why should I register in such lasting characters, that for so many years,—

> " I soundly slept the night away,
> " And did just nothing all the day ?"

Your friend Mr. Emin has permission to go abroad with the Duke, which makes him very happy; he has a mind to deserve an Epitaph, and I wish his heroism may not make him want one too soon; he has no doubt a great desire of fame after death, though it will give him less satisfaction than an opera would to my deaf footman, because he will be deafer; or if he is from on high a spectator of our poor comedy, he will think the drama more foolish. I wish he may succeed in his hopes; he has a great and a good mind;

he dined tête à tête with me on Wednesday, and yesterday he dined with Lord Lyttelton, and spent part of his evening with me; so that if I had not ignobly married a private gentleman, I might have had a chance for being Queen of Persia; but as that boisterous fellow, Kouli Khan, broke the Peacock Throne to pieces, it is no matter: Bradshaw makes very good sophas, and there are no seats so hard to sit upon, and so uneasy, as thrones. Then it would have grieved me that the first time the bark happened to disagree with me, they would have hanged my first Physician, and perhaps have stuffed his skin, and, contrary to European custom, the patient would have caused the death of the Doctor; to be sure, you like the English mode better, where the doctor kills the patient! I suppose you have heard of the sudden and marvellous change of Ministry! If the French do but think us as valorous in combat as we are stable in councils, they must foresee the ruin of the House of Bourbon, and of the power of France. Those who go out,

wear a broad grin, and those who are come in so smile, that should the frightfullest grinner be the winner, it is hard to say which side will get the better. We say here that the city is angry, the country not pleased, and the court in confusion; who will win the race, and who be distanced, you know best at Newmarket perhaps. Mr. Montagu desires his compliments, and does not yet talk of kicking you; whether he doubts if you love me as much as you say, or he thinks kicking of no efficacy in the case, I do not know. Would it not look malicious in me to desire him to try? you make an apology for your long letters, which to the curious, diligent, and intelligent eye, are just legible; I have wrote in such haste I think mine is not so, but it is no matter for the exact meaning of any thing I have said, or shall say, except that I am, sir,

Your faithful friend,

and obliged humble servant,

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Sandleford, July the 5th.

DEAR SIR,

I THANK you for your moral epistle from Claremont. A more vulgar mind than yours would have fallen in with the custom of the place, and have wrote nothing but news and politics; but you send me an admirable panegyric upon truth, and a high seasoned well spiced satire upon falsehood. I should be very glad to have your speculations upon all subjects, and, that you may go through the sciences, as you have written me an ethic epistle from a prime minister's I should be glad if you would make a visit to a lord chancellor or a chief justice, that I might have from you some theological discourses. If you were to pass a day or two at Lambeth, I should not doubt but you would edify the world with a treatise on the military arts, and in less than a week's

residence with Mr. Bradley in the observatory at Greenwich, you would give us such botanic essays as would delight and inform even our friend Stillingfleet. You maintain with dignity what Milton asserts, "That the mind is its own place:" which those few who have, what may be called a mind, know to be true; but the generality of heads are mere mirrors, and only reflect the image of what is placed before them. I rejoice to hear your grandchild is well, for the mind has a trick of being glad, when those we love escape danger of death; but how far our joy is well founded, is, as you observe, very questionable. If you had not complained of your health, your letter would have given me a great deal of pleasure; for in all other respects it was quite to my liking. I do not love the epistolary forms. Forms of all kind indeed are good to keep fools from endless deviations; but I like the vagaries of people of sense, and pray when you write to me, go up and down your sheet of paper, saying what you please en passant. I am really disturbed

at the continuance of your complaints; in Apollo's temple, you should have been cured or you should have been inspired. Perhaps he will not practise as physician or poet at a minister's without a pension. I hope you will come to Sandleford when I return from Bath Easton, and I will make you well, or humour you and nurse you, till you are better than well. The country air has done me great service, I am in perfect health, I am out of doors all day, either walking or in my post chaise, and sometimes sit and read and write in the fresh air, and sometimes, as you say, meditate on death as I sit at the foot of an oak tree; when one considers it as an entrance to another life it is worth thinking about; as to the when and how, it troubles me not; whether it prevents the languor and sufferings of old age or kindly cures them, is hardly worth a thought. What signified whether the * cereus you was admiring had been gathered in the blossom or was suffered to finish its twelve hours course! I am now just

A short lived flower.

where you left the cereus, " its glory gone, faded," and by to-morrow morning shall be withered. You disdain to stoop to such petty matters as the fate of kings and cities, but his Prussian Majesty is defeated, and Prague is delivered! What will become of the Protestant interest? I wish we may have better news from the Duke, for indeed we are in a miserable situation. If it were not for the harmony, sincerity, and good agreement of our ministry, we should have cause of apprehension, but they all love each other and their country; no private views or personal interest, or family affections, or party connexions, will disturb their unanimous endeavours to save poor England. The Dean of Exeter came hither last Tuesday, he was so good as to stay with me till yesterday. Mr. Montagu staid in town upon business, but I hope for the pleasure of seeing him to-day. Is Mrs. Torriano returned from Portsmouth, or does our friend Mr. Torriano still, like the turtle, weep and mourn the absence of his mate? Is Mr. Stillingfleet in town

or at Malvern? you see I am like the provident ant, careful in summer of my winter comforts; I shall want all these good people in town in November; at present I think as little of them as I can. Do not imagine that I am living here like a fine lady, or splenetic, indolent, and idle. I am walking in the garden before eight, breakfast before nine, find the day too short for my employments, and go to bed at eleven, because Dr. Monsey says it is wholesome, and because I could not rise before seven if I sat up later. I am impatient to hear how our Persian hero is received at the camp of his Royal Highness; I am glad he was not in this unsuccessful engagement with the King of Prussia, for he would have thought it necessary to his honour to have been among the dead, rather than the prisoners, or those who ran away.

I am, dear Sir,

your sincere friend,

and obedient humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

the 26th of July.

At Mrs. Scott's in Beaufort Square, Bath.

And so, Sir, your pride and your vanity, and your laziness, and your indolence, and your indifference for your friends, have at length persuaded you, that you are not to write to me again, till I have thank'd you for those letters I have already received! Small trust have you in my gratitude, if you require all bills drawn upon it should be paid at sight. Mr. Stillingfleet can write to me, and where is there a philosopher less desœuvré than one who studies the infinite folios of divine wisdom, that reads the stars and can rightly spell of every herb that sips the dew? Why! you do not perceive an eclipse of the sun unless, for want of light, you run your head against a post at noon-day; as for simples, I cannot say you are absolutely ignorant of those that are medicinal, I am sensible you make pretty good use

of them, but I will be hang'd if you know how many leaves there are in a daisy, or how many fibres in the leaf of a pimpernel; you are neither looking up at the stars nor down at the plants, and therefore why am I overlooked and forgotten? truly I believe, because you sit vis-à-vis Mrs. Garrick; but pray what business have you with Venus or the Graces, or any thing so like them as the said Mrs. Garrick? I think I am a very pretty kind of a sickly woman, that look as if I had sometimes had the jaundice, and as if I might sometime or another have it again; and altogether a very proper subject for your doctorship's admiration and meditation, and so, Sir, I expect some tokens of your attention by the next post. Have I not given you leave to entertain me out of any corner of your brain, and promis'd to read with equal complaisance what your wisdom or your wit shall suggest, nay even what you may say in your foolishness, if your wit should be at low ebb?

Whether you choose Cervantes' serious air,
Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy chair,

write like the sage Charron or the fantastical Hudibras, I am still your gentle reader: and I have generally observed people of wit choose companions for their patient hearing, rather than their quick reply, and I imagined with such, the more one attended and the less one replied the better; but since you will be answered, I must tell you why I have not sooner complied with that humour of yours. I have been wandering from place to place; I went to Windsor to make a visit to Mrs. Stanley, and there I spent some days very idly and very agreeably; and I have been at this place ever since last Thursday, taking sweet counsel with my sister and Lady Bab Montagu, and in their company thinking but little of the absent. As to your request that you may send my letter to Mr. Affleck, permit me to say, no; I am extremely pleased that he is partial enough to me to desire it, and, if he loves a little nonsense now and then for his recreation, why I own it a harmless thing, and

I would not refuse your sending my letters merely because they are nonsenical; but I have known such disagreeable things arise from a communication of private letters, that I beg to be excused; there is so much envy, malice, and nonsense, in the world, that the most innocent amusement cannot escape; some fool might know my letters were shewn Mr. Affleck; that fool would tell another, who would report to a third fool, that I was vain of my letters, and loved to have them communicated; and to what three fools assert some wise man would assent, and I should be ridiculous. One walks about in this world in as much danger and dread of ridicule as people do in some parts of America of the thread worm, which in spite of all care will imperceptibly get into the heel, and from thence poison the whole body. I had a letter from Mr. Stillingfleet yesterday, in which he speaks much of the virtues of Malvern waters, but does not tell me how they agree with him, which I take ill, for when can they have a subject of more worth to the world

and to me? Mrs. Boscawen and a friend of hers will come to me at my return for a few days, and then my house will be pretty well filled. As soon as they leave me, I hope you will favour me with the performance of your promise.

Ever your most obliged,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Thursday the 4th August, 1757.

DEAR DOCTOR,

IT is apparent from the contention of various goddesses for you, that you resemble Paris in features, complexion, air, and mien, and, as I flatter myself I am not less like Venus than you are to that beau garçon, I do not doubt your decision in my favour; and I will have a picture made of it. Hogarth will hit the subject better than Apelles could do. You have written me one letter to prove

you are in love with me, another to prove I am in love with you: indeed you seem to have taken most pains, and given more arguments to demonstrate the latter, which was certainly unnecessary, and it was the natural consequence of the former; however, thanks to the probability of the fact, and the force of your logic, it is now so fully made out, we may expect our names should be inscribed in that small niche of the temple of fame that is consecrated to the memory of constant lovers. I know the charms of my rivals, but I think it is impossible they should disturb so tender and mutual a passion, and I will not be jealous for fear of the jaundice, and the soap, and rhubarb, with which you threaten me. I will be gentle and kind, and take the flattery you promised, instead of the medicine, for I find it much more palatable, not only than any bitter, but than any other sweet. Honey is an extract and essence of roses and violets, &c. but flattery seems to be drawn from one's own perfections, which have an odour and

flavour of more exquisite sense than any aromatic: so, Sir, if you please, I will take it in small doses to exhilarate the spirits, without intoxicating the brain. I hope you will not be so narrow-minded as to exclude my Persian hero from his share of my heart, for without two such lovers as Dr. Monsey and Mr. Emin I cannot be so considerable as I desire: I shall make use of him to exterminate my enemies, and of you to preserve my friends; no good housewife thinks her menage complete without an extinguisher and a save-all. I am greatly rejoiced at Mr. Emin's kind reception at the camp. I will write to him very soon, and send you the letter unsealed, that you may treat me with the same frankness in regard to the billet doux of the Herefordshire dames; for if I know by what art they attack your heart, I can the better see how to defend it. Perhaps they will send you a basket of golden pippins from Herefordshire, but they will only serve to put you in mind of me; I am more afraid of a bushel of redstreaks from Mrs.

Price, as they will bring her image to your mind, if she has as fine a glow in her cheeks now as she had when she was Miss Barrington; I should look upon such a proceeding as a coquetry equal to sending you her picture; nor need she add to her apples the sweet-heart's motto:

When these you see,
Remember me.

Lady Sophia Egerton will find it difficult to give any thing that can represent her; Herefordshire will hardly furnish an Addison, or a Vandyke, to delineate her mind, her manners, or her person; and elegant must be the pen or the pencil that can denote her truly. I was very proud of your politeness to Lady Anson, for I attribute your facility in making compliments to the power of wonder-working Cupid. I approve greatly of her hint to Mr. Emin to write to his great patron, it is not only fit but needful; but, oh Doctor! not Cupid's best disciples can work such a miracle as shutting the mouths of fools, so attempt it not; you might easier stop Æolus's cavern with your hat, than

sew up a fool's mouth, even with a cable. Mrs. Boscawen will not come to Sandleford when she proposed, so I hope to see you there very soon; you shall hear from me when I have fixed the day for my return home. Pray write to Lady Sophia and Mrs. Price before you come to Sandleford, for I design to make you more in love with me there than you have been yet, for I am wonderfully amicable in the country. I have time there to be good, and I know you love good people. Adieu! I have not time to write you a longer letter, having some necessary letters to write; and I think it was hardly necessary to give my assent in form to all you advanced about your love and mine; the point was clear, but to make it more binding, I now give it under my hand and seal that I am Dr. Monsey's

most affectionate humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

August 6, 1757.

ONE might as properly write an elegy to the god Momus as a melancholy letter to Dr. Monsey; and yet I cannot write in any other style; my spirits are sunk beyond measure by the melancholy news from Germany. I grieve for my country, for all the brave men who have or will perish in this affair, and especially for my brave volunteer, who, I fear, will never return to us. I beg you to let me know what you hear from the camp; Mr. Emin said he was one of the corps of Hunters, and the papers say they are all cut off; I could sit down and cry for him, if it were not too effeminate a proof of concern to give to the memory of so brave a man. I have but this comfort, that his intentions were good and laudable; he meant to qualify himself to serve his country, and not to serve a personal ambition by making war on the peaceable and the feeble;

but to fight with tyranny, oppression, superstition, and ignorance; and he who rewards and punishes the secret thoughts, will reward him.

> Is there no bright reversion in the sky
> For those who greatly think and bravely die?

Surely there is an exalted bliss destined to those who are actuated by a true and genuine patriotism! I mean such patriotism as dwells in the upright heart and pure; not to the vain pretences, pride, luxury, and ambition, make to it. Let me hear immediately what hope of poor Emin, and be more explicit about Mr.——. I have no doubt of the rectitude of his conduct; but let me know what Slander says. I pity your daughter that she goes on furnishing more subjects to this wretched country. I pity the king as a king, and as a father. If you can tell me any thing that can harden me against the impressions of ill news, and make calamity taste like prosperity, pray send me the prescription. I will not attempt to answer your agreeable lively letters,

for I am more disposed to weeping than mirth; I will take up my book and turn my eyes to times past; the present is miserable, and the future looks black. Pray God send us all a disposition fitted to what we are to bear, and that we may be amended by his chastisements; and so they will work a repentance not to be repented of. I have made two pacquets of the letters lest they should be over weight. A thousand thanks for your letters; as for your friendship for me, it is always answered though your letters are not. I am very well, which I know you will be glad to hear. Lady Bab Montagu and my sister fancy you have a great deal of wit, in spite of all I can say to the contrary; it seems they take your words rather than my word; my sister desired me to say something civil to you, but I cannot say any thing to-day; the French have taken my mind prisoner, and it groans in its chains.

I am, dear Sir,
your sincere and affectionate
humble Servant,
E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Sandleford, Thursday Morning.

DEAR DOCTOR,

I AM no longer a vagrant; I came home on Tuesday, and here I expect you; so get into the Newbury machine as fast as you can, it will land you by six o'clock in the afternoon at Newbury, and from thence my post chaise shall bring you to Sandleford. I have sent you my letter to Emin unsealed according to your orders, not daring to contradict your wisdom in any thing; indeed I have had a very high opinion of your judgment ever since you have admired me so much; for I attribute your extraordinary admiration of me to a more than usual degree of penetration; and you may rest assured that I shall think you the wisest man in the world, till I meet with another that admires me as much, and I believe that may hardly happen, for though I am cer-

tainly possessed of many excellent qualifications, the world is so blind and stupid, they do not make any impression upon people in general. I believe my first letter to Mr. Stillingfleet miscarried, so pray direct this to him; I have been obliged to write a thousand letters to-day, so I hope you will excuse this very short one, and desire it may not be an example to you. I have but just time to say I am impatient, and very impatient, to see you here, and that I expect neither Claremont, Lady Anson, nor Mrs. Garrick, should detain you from

your very affectionate
and humble Servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 23rd August, 1757.

DEAR DOCTOR,

I AM sorry you have so good a reason for not giving me the pleasure of your com-

pany at Sandleford at this time, I hope your little patient will soon recover its health, your daughter her peace of mind, and you your liberty. I read your panegyrick of Mrs. Alexander with great pleasure. I have a high opinion of those, who can acquit themselves of the filial duty to their parents' content, for the debt of a child can only be understood by a parent, who knows, that a thousand obligations arise from heartfelt solicitudes, and tendernesses unexpressed, and which do indeed greatly exceed the sum of visible benefit, and the outward acts of attendance and education. I assure you I have always honoured you for your rational and well-founded love of a worthy daughter, and not less for your foolish instinct about your little grand children. I have a great respect for instinct, though it is no philosopher at all. Like the mother tongue it is plain, direct, and speaks suitably to the occasion; Reason, like a dead language, is learnt by rule, and though it may express itself with more dignity than honest mother Instinct, it is less ready and less

copious; and where Instinct's plain homilies are well attended to, the laboured discourses of moral philosophers are little wanted. You draw a more melancholy scene than you intended, perhaps, in the last paragraph of your letter. The tragic muse, with eloquent tears and solemn preparation, makes Massinissa present the poisoned bowl to his captive love, but without Melpomene's tear-compelling art, I could weep for the poor grand-father approaching his grand child with a lancet in one hand and a blister in the other: so when you have any of these domestic distresses, you may bring them to me, and I will give them their due share of pity; for I do not reserve all my compassion for the misfortunes that stalk in buskins. When people's griefs are of that dignity and public character, they can lay them in state, sing solemn dirges over them, inter them with funeral pomp, and set up a superb monument upon them; they taste the luxury of woe, but the griefs, that must be privately buried in the breast, are the most bitter. If I had

thought my letter to Mr. Stillingfleet could have amused you I would not have sealed it, but would you have thought so yourself if it had not been sealed? Curiosity aids temptation, and perhaps few seals and few commandments would be broken, if people knew before hand the little worth of the matter prohibited. Methinks I wish, for your edification on this head, you had broken open the letter, and at a small expence you had learnt that weariness and repentance follows the violation of any right, even the poor prohibition of a wafer. I reckon it a great merit to have resisted temptation, but some severer moralists say, it is wrong even to have been sensible of its attacks; so to make you expiate this offence, your penance shall be to read the next letter I write to Mr. Stillingfleet. It seems for once I committed a fault through humility, but forgive it, good Doctor, for it is ten to one the next may happen from vanity. I am sorry you could not wait on the Duchess of Leeds, whom you have great reason to esteem. I believe indeed,

you are a philosopher as to great ladies and fine ladies, though you are a foolish sort of a body as to your grand children. I do not find any foolishness in your head, but there is a great deal in your heart, and pray keep it there; for it makes you a tender parent, a good friend, and a very indulgent correspondent; for let me tell you it is your heart that judges of my letters, and it is but equitable it should do so, for when I write to my friends, and I write to none that I do not take to be so, it is the heart dictates, and my brains, if I have any, are perfectly neuter. I wish Torri and his turtle would come with you to Sandleford; pray tell them there are groves for turtles, and I will give them dove-like and gentle entertainment, and many thanks for their company. I hope Emin's letter will be returned to me, for every page of a hero's history is worth preserving. As soon as the babe has recovered its health, and your daughter her spirits, I hope I shall see you here; till then pray tell Mrs. Alexander I desire you would not come, which she should

understand as a high compliment from one who is with great sincerity,

Your affectionate
and faithful humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 28th of August, 1757.

DEAR DOCTOR HUDIBRAS.

I THANK you for your verse, and I thank you for your prose, and I am obliged to Mr. Garrick for judging more candidly of your verse and of me, than you did. Pray, Sir, do you think I am descended in a right line from Longinus the great critic, and can relish nothing but the sublime? I am not so much as related to Aristarchus by the female side, nor can I, like Doctor Bentley, and some more recent critics, give a poet the sense, or the nonsense, that does not belong to him; but I can candidly accept of both, understanding what

is to be understood, and with much reverence and humble fear, admit what is not. Your serpent and your serpentine motto are absolutely unintelligible, it is not the eloquent serpent that tempted Eve, for it has not said a word to me, bad or good. I return my thanks to Mrs. Alexander for the Epistle, there are many pretty lines in it, but Mr. Pope has almost exhausted the subject. As to Emin's letters, I am ashamed to say, I cannot find them; I hope you received his letter from the camp, which was written to all his patronesses; I sent it from Bath Easton. I shall depend on your promise of coming hither as soon as you have paid your visit at Wotton; pray make my compliments to Mrs. Evelyn, and Sir John. I honour the venerable shades of Wotton, and more still the respectable inhabitants of it. You may write me a penseroso from the fir grove, which at once drives away vain deluding joys, and introduces a serious habit of mind. If Mrs. Alexander has any amusement from my letters, I shall not oppose your shewing them to her, but to send them to

a scholar and a divine, and one who has taken his master of arts degree, is another affair. The Muses would be affronted, and the Graces would be frightened, and the sciences would be astonished, and what would become of your humble servant in the uproar? Pray send in my name to Mrs. Denoyer's at the Golden Bible in Lisle Street for an 100 of the best pens, and half a ream of the finest and thinnest quarto paper ungilt, and let them come down in your portmanteau; please to pay her, for you can better afford to trust me than she can; she is honest, and, from that reason perhaps, not rich. I sent Torri some carp and other good things, to shew him the richness of the promised land, but fear he may be too stubborn to accept of the invitation.

I am, as much as the Muses, and more than the fine ladies, whose favours you boast, dear Dr. Monsey's

Faithful humble servant,

E. Montagu.

If I endure this bad weather with patience, is it not as good a trial as being rolled in the kennel? Pray let me know, for I will have the honour of being patient, or the indulgence of being impatient.

From Dr. Monsey to Mrs. Montagu.

Wotton, September the 3rd, 6 in the Morning.

DEAR MADAM,

I CANNOT be quiet when I am up, nor rest in my bed a mornings for you; I wish you were dead with all my heart, for I shall be hanged for your murder; I'll have you swum for a witch, or weighed against the church bible; I'm sure I have not fair play some way or other. If I take up a book, instead of the title-page, there stands Montagu in Roman capitals, stares me full in the face, and says, I have not wrote to you the lord knows when; up I jump, and leave them all at the tea. "Where are you going, Doctor?" says Miss Evelyn. "Going? to write to Mrs. Mon-

tagu. Where should I be going?" "Lord," says she, "you wrote to her four sides of paper the night before last." "Did I? why then I'll write her fourteen and make it up a dozen and an half; but, with submission, it is a cursed lie, for I have not wrote to her this fortnight."—"Well then, I don't know what you do up a nights; for the maid says you hav'n't above two inches of candle left, and that you burnt my father up above ten shillings worth of fire billet." "As to that matter, madam, if I haven't burnt my own fingers, don't trouble my head about your candle, and as to your turpentine sticks, the more I burn the better; for your house is clutter'd up so with old trees, and so much damp'd with your paltry fountains, that you may think yourself obliged to me for letting in a little sun and air: besides, do you think I write to Mrs. Montagu as brokers sell tea and tobacco, by inch of candle? I write to her by the light of my own understanding, and if she dont make me out by hers, do you lend her yours. At present I shall

go up, and write to her by the light of the sun, and when I have wrote him down, I shall go on by the moon's, and not mind any scarcasms of yours, as being under her influence; and so you may walk to Parson Duncombe's this morning, all alone by yourself, for all me;" and so I walked up in an huff; when I came up, as I hope to be saved there lay the four sides of paper; I thought I should have sunk through the floor; by this time my passion was cooled, and down I went; when I came to the parlour door, hearing a loud gibble gabble, and among the rest a shrill voice out of a sharp nose, I listened, but the sentences came broken.—"For my part, come to peoples houses and write to other people, as if there were not—in the world—two whole candles—19 sticks of —fire the house—for him at breakfast—milk for himself—rude—civil—understand it—not I—my Lord—too sweet—brown bread and"—then says my Lord, "This woman has a blessed time on't—every post—three times a week—I—oftener—sick—last week—head ache—

indigestion—call for pen and ink—to the apothecary—his head—something else—R. Montagu ℨijſs."—"Shocking," says another voice."—"Dead—lost life at this rate—Tom, bring the waiter—lord to be sure—poison you—joke—wonder your Lordship for—can bear it"—and then in I bolted, not caring to be kick'd out of my Lord's favour for a foolish letter; says I, "My Lord, as to the mistake of R. Montagu ℨijſs. I ask your pardon, but if you remember, just as I was taking up the pen to write for your rhubarb and diagrydium, 'Here,' says you, 'take this; Mrs. Montagu's, by the hand, I fancy:'—now R. Montagu being Latin for take Montagu, two words your Lordship had used, and the last always striking my tympanum with great force, it broke through, jostled the rhubarb out of the way, before I was aware on't, and ran down to the end of my pen; and indeed I did certainly say, Take of Mrs. Montagu two ounces and a half; "very well," says you, "as much of her yourself as you please; but indeed sir, it is not a time of life for me to take

two ounces and a half of any woman in England, without so much as knowing the colour of her hair or the complexion of her face, and you are mightily mistaken, if you think to make me swallow her instead of rhubarb, because she tells you she has got a *yellow jaundice:* I have a great respect for the lady from what I have heard you and Miss Evelyn say of her, but I value her too much, and have too many fears about my throat, to swallow her for a bolus."—"Your Lordship will be pleased to remember, I desired you to take but ʒijſs, that is, of her thumb, middle and fore finger aa ʒi.; of her heart as much as I can spare, or her husband is willing to part with, and that won't hurt your throat; of her brain, for that she can spare, ʒi, and you know the ancients were very fond of the cranium humanum, but the moderns have changed it for brain, finding that nine patients out of ten want brain more than scull—of the celerity of her hand ʒij, and then your Lordship won't have so much trouble in franking my letters to her: I don't mention any thing of her benevo-

lence, because you don't want that.—Of her vivacity ʒijfs. for it can be no reproach to a man who is ten times eight years old to go to a woman who is but three times twelve for a little of that.—As to her patience she cannot spare above gr. i, for I have swallowed long ago more than my share of that.—I could add a good lump of her knowledge, for she wouldn't miss that, if your Lordship wanted it, and so I could of many excellent qualifications besides, if you had not enough of your own; but there can be no harm for a polite man to take a little of the delicacy, softness, &c. of a lady, to make ʒjifs. and make it up into a bolus or draught, with the essence of her judgment, the je ne scay quoi of her looks, and the syrup of her sweetness. M. f. bolus vel haust. sumend. omn. nocte horâ somni. I should prefer the draught because you will taste that most, and have but one fear about it, and that is, if you once get a taste of her you won't leave me a piece of her body and soul as broad as a single penny"—"Well, Mr. Doctor, I have no objection to your prescription, but how will you manage about the three

nails, I hear they turn up a little?"—"They did, my Lord, but she has made them lie squat with some ivory thimbles,"—"Well, and so what am I to take nails and thimbles and all?" "Why, my Lord, pray what's the harm of that? has not Shaw prescribed rasura eboris an hundred times to your daughter? and I should be glad to know what an ivory thimble is but a rasura eboris." "But the nails, Sir, the nails! I have known women's nails make severe impressions upon men's faces, and I presume you won't pretend to say the membranes of a throat are not full as tender as the skin of her face!"—"Upon my word, my Lord, you are too precise, Radcliffe would have taken up his hat and gloves and turned his back upon you in less than half this time, and ordered you a cursed nauseous draught into the bargain. Here have I mixed you up the panacea incomparabilis, the anima mundi, the flos medicamentorum, the levamen dolorum, and quintessentialis elixir vitæ; and you are making a scruple about a nail."*

* This extract is given as a specimen of Dr. Monsey's humour.

To Doctor Monsey.

Sandleford, Sept. the 8th, 1757.

MOST PENSIVE DOCTOR,

You have courted Melancholy in the Cypress grove with great success; I did not know she would be so yielding to your first address; but you may now depend on her constancy, she will not leave you for the next new lover, or the next new fashion; she will punctually observe any assignation you make her in the country, but don't imagine she will follow to London; she hates Pall Mall, and does not love the Stable Yard, but oft in

> Glimmering bowers and glades,
> You'll meet her, and in secret shades
> Of woody Wotton's inmost grove,
> Where yet there is some fear of Jove.

I assure you we have Groves too at Sandleford, where you may meet your Amante Sposa, Dame Melancholy, as

often as you please. Perhaps she may be a little jealous of me, who was long a maid of honour to Euphrosyne, and though I am now too old to figure in her train, I have still an apartment in her palace, but I will own,

> "The pensive nun, devout, and pure,
> Sober, stedfast, and demure,"

is a better guide at all times, and in the evening's walk of life, a more creditable companion than the

> "Goddess fair and free
> In Heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne:"

so bid her begone with her

> "Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
> Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
> And hail the Goddess sage and holy,
> Hail, divinest Melancholy!"

With even step, and musing gait, she will lead you gently down the vale of years, till you arrive without surprise at the verge of another world, and while you cast your eyes backwards and forwards,

" Equal you'll look on either life, and here
See nothing to regret, nor there to fear."

But though I would have this sage goddess, like a faithful wife, attend you through all the important cares of life, I would not have her, like a jealous one, controul your amusements, or rigidly censure your innocent pleasure. Wisdom, like the sun, sends forth rays of all colours, and the quality of the object they fall upon determines, whether they shall exhibit to us a sober green, or lively red, the modest violet, or the glaring orange. Those who in old times called themselves philosophers, not being able to get the true grain colours, imitated the robe in which wisdom does oftenest appear, and the vulgar, who forgot that she, prudent goddess, dresses always to the occasion, thought they wore her livery, while, alas! they were never in her service, and if they received the wages of it, they procured them by impudent imposture. Socrates indeed got a coat of her genuine changeable, and the oracle acknowledged its divine original; but Athens despised

it as not being a professor's gown. Your guardian goddess will not prohibit your harlequin dress, when you have only a farce to act; she will leave you in possession of your pleasant doggrel, and your whimsical prose, and will only tell you, you must not say your prayers, make your will, or conclude a bargain in such facetious language.

Longinus, accustomed as he was to sublime, would have stared at your whale; it is indeed the sublime of sublime; if you had taken all the matter of the universe, and, with the rolling pin of your imagination, rolled it out into a whale, and then set it a swimming in the regions of infinite space, you could not have given a nobler image. It would swallow the Psalmist's Leviathan, and Job's Behemoth as a pike does a minim. Poor little things! they do not look as large as a Thames flounder, when compared to your whale. All monsters, not only such as range the elements, but even those who sport in the unbounded regions of imagination, must hide their diminished heads.

If one of his scales could be drawn in miniature upon Salisbury Plain, it would serve to give the vulgar an imperfect idea of him, and no longer would they give their two-pences at Westminster Bridge, to see an elephant, or an ostrich: they would leave these minima of nature to minute philosophers, to contemplate in their microscopes. The Academy at Paris would send the most learned of its members to measure a fin of your whale, stately animal! which would find itself *à sec* in the vast Atlantic Ocean. The wise and respectable Peer was much in the right not to take the bolus you prescribed; it would have given him a strange giddiness in his head; and in the Senate or at Council, when he had been asked his opinion in some state affairs, like the Politician in the Rehearsal, he would have desired first to have a dance; I am sure I could not mend Lord Godolphin, my best qualities being in a much greater degree in him, and my follies would not become him; I am too small to make a pill for

your whale, so please to leave me as I am, that is,

Your affectionate
and faithful humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

I shall expect you on Monday; Torri is an owl, and you may tell him so.

To the Same.

Sandleford, 13th Sept. 1757.

DEAR DOCTOR.

I AM concerned to find your little grand daughter is ill again, and sorry the Fates have laid you in irons. I am not of your opinion that the riddle would puzzle a justice of peace or a country parson; I imagine his worship would find it out, even after a Michaelmas goose, and drinking a tankard of double brewed October; and so far from puzzling the parson, I

think he could not puzzle his parish with it, even if he should endeavour to explain it in his next Sunday's sermon; though I have known some of them explain a thing till all men doubted it. I desire that the profoundity of the next riddle may be equal to the plummet line of my wit; send me some worthy of that great riddle-monger, Master Œdipus, and you shall have the solution of them directly; but do not imagine I will sweep sooty chimneys for your sake. After the roll of thanks you have sent me, I cannot tax you with ingratitude, but I cannot absolutely ascertain in my mind what it contains, as I am not philosopher enough to measure or compute the proportion of infinite; but, at a gross reckoning, I must imagine your roll of thanks would reach from hence to the most distant of the fixed stars; if it should fall short a yard or two of my computation, I would impute it to the hurry you were in, and not to any disrespect, and shall therefore remain with an interminable regard and infinite respect, an inexhaustible affec-

tion, and an eternal friendship, most sublime son of the sublime Apollo,

Your faithful humble Servant,

E. MONTAGU.

You may bring your self here any time the next week that you please; the two next succeeding weeks I am not sure we may not have our house too full to contain a gentleman of your prodigious and immense ideas.

To the Same.

28th Sept.

DEAR DOCTOR,

"GREAT wits to madness are most near allied," and on that plea I might perhaps have had some pretence for chaining you down to your chair or the bed-post, and great thanks I should have had from all the gentle dull, who are more afraid of a wit than of a wolf or a lion; but I think that wits are as useful to clear and enliven

society, as winds and lightning to clear the air; and should therefore make some scruple to confine you. I wish the pin in your sleeve had rather prick'd your arm than your conscience; be not uneasy about the matter; it is of no consequence; it was only to ask a question of Mr. Torriano concerning Mrs. Poyntz's house, and I can apply to him by letter. Ten thousand thanks for ten thousand letters which you conveyed to me by the last post. I am impatient and anxious to know the history of Emin's bank notes; I am afraid there is some *brouillerie* with certain great persons in the case; I tremble lest the natural dignity of a great mind should have made him transgress those rules, which the insolence of the great, and the servility of the vulgar, have established and consented to; and though you and I know he is a sprightly Asiatic and a great-souled hero, which are very different from a German and a courtier, any transgression of form, would be rigourously judged, and no allowance made for the temper of the nation or the character of the man.

You know the great expect even the laws of nature should be suspended to let their will take place. Though you are zealously my friend and a little partial, yet I think your ambition for me must be pretty well satisfied with the title Emin has given me, Queen of the Universe! I vow, I think it sounds prettily! don't fancy I shall make this paltry planet the seat of my empire; If he had offered me the rule of this world I would not have accepted of it. I do not think well enough of mankind to wish to govern them; give them liberty, and they grow licentious; make them rich, they become proud, luxurious and corrupt. Pray seek me subjects in a world, where the animal that styles itself rational, is governed by reason; where advantages give happiness, and benefits procure gratitude. I wish our philosopher could give some guess at the inhabitants of our solar system; those of Mercury I suppose are all wits; those of Venus lovers; and those of Saturn politicians; so I will not go to any of those settlements; look me out a world

me know what Emin has been doing, and what offence threw his great soul into convulsions! for the short letter expressed great perturbation. I am,

Dear Doctor,

Your very affectionate

and faithful humble servant,

E. M.

I wrote this letter yesterday morning, having, I know not why, taken it into my head it was post-day. I received your kind and entertaining letter in the evening, and though I had determined to give all my hours to reading, from which I had as long a fast almost as your Bedlam patient had from food, I cannot help telling you I am much concerned at your illness: when you come to Sandleford again, you shall eat lemon-peel. All your letters come in such an answerable shape, it is great self-denial not to enter into particulars, but I cannot but desire you to believe me, when I sincerely assure you I found nothing to censure in all the affairs

which pays due homage to its maker, obeys his laws, and acts as reason, animated by benevolence, should do; there I will go, and you may follow me at your leisure; you may leave your title of M. D. behind you; for where there are no vices and moderate passions, you will find little occasion for medicinal art. I have sent copies of all Emin's Epistles (except the last to me) by this post to Mr. Stillingfleet. I took the liberty of sending the copies of his letters to you, imagining I should save you trouble and give him the pleasure of having them the sooner. I won't say, because I can't say, how much I was obliged to you for your visit. My brother and sister left us early this morning. Mr. Montagu desires his compliments to you, I will not indulge myself in an idle inclination to write you a long letter, I have spent all my time of late in company; so I will now commune with my own heart in my chamber, and be still, as a good and wise man advises. Remember all, that Midas's queen suffered in the pangs of curiosity, and let

you communicated to me. I believe you might leave your heart to be anatomized as well as your body; it has not been callous nor schirrous; that is certain. Pray put a needle into your sleeve, since a pin is not sharp enough to goad your memory, in order to remind you to tell me the true interpretation of Emin's heroical epistle. I will observe your direction for the poor girl; as to the good woman she does not begin your medicine till to-morrow, for her husband had externally applied the virtue of a crab stick, and then turned her into a ditch, the night after you left us; and I thought it might be better to let her be quiet after so violent an operation; the poor creature always grows yellow after one of these bouts, and her husband would certainly forbear such a practice, if she was young and handsome, merely out of respect to her complexion; so you see it is not without reason I have such reluctance to grow old. The question you were to ask Torri, was only whether Mr. and Mrs. Freere found their house at Mitcham dry and commodious; for I would not

recommend it to Mrs. Southwell, unless it would be in all respects agreeable. I shall write to Emin very soon; in the mean time my best wishes and respects to him; pray write as often and as much as your leisure will allow, and your fancy afford. My birth day is coming, I grow old, and I should grow wise; perhaps to read more sense, and write less nonsense, may be one means of doing so. I will bid you farewell for the present, but I shall write to you again when I am thirty-seven, but I am now engaged in a sort of death-bed repentance, for the idleness of the thirty-sixth year of my age. I will drink your health on Sunday with all due ceremony and sincere zeal. Pray don't be sick.

I am, and shall ever be,
your affectionate and faithful
humble servant,
E. M.

To the Same.

Sandleford, October 2.

And the Birth-day of two Illustrious Persons.

MY CLIMACTERIC FRIEND,

GOOD morrow to you, Sir! and many years and happy! How do you find yourself? Are you tired with your journey of 63 years? or are you in spirits to go forward to the stage of 64. Does Hope lead you by the hand, and Philosophy support you under the arm?—You are a wise man, and therefore not to be cheated by hope; you are a mortal man, and of mere flesh and blood, therefore not absolutely to be sustain'd by philosophy. I will tell you therefore how you find yourself; why, alas! like one that has toil'd up to the top of a barren hill, and finds his pains ill paid, is unwilling to stay where he is, too wise to wish to measure back the weary way, and afraid to proceed to the term and limit of his journey: be not

ashamed of this; it is the quality of the road, not the infirmity of the traveller; ask those who have made the progress in a triumphal car, or who have loll'd all the way in a state coach, or who have jolted through it on a dray cart? They will all tell you, they had a rough and tedious journey. March easily and indolently the rest of your way; don't join the busy throng that run down the precipice in search of gain, nor the revel rout, whom pleasure leads with unsteady steps, and through dangerous paths, to the bourn from whence no traveller returns. In your sober walk, do not disdain to pick up the few aromatics, that grow on the declivity of the hill, and beguile the tediousness of the way; they will fade as you gather them; throw them away and gather fresh ones; don't seek them with impatience, don't part with them with regret; remember they are annuals. Fill your bosom with unfading faith and ever springing hope of happy immortality; their divine effluvia will support and refresh your spirits. The sages of the

world will advise you to put on a surtout of fortitude to defend you from bad weather, " to arm the obdurate breast—with " stubborn patience as with triple steel." The men of pleasure will invite you to delicious banquets, gilded roofs and voluptuous entertainments, which

" With a pleasing sorcery may charm
Pain for a while or anguish and excite fallacious hope,
Vain wisdom all and false philosophy !"

As we think of our cause, as we hope of our judge, we shall go to our trial dejected or chearful. If you think me too serious, pray remember I am a year older than I was yesterday. I suppose you want to ask me how I find myself at the end of period 36. Must I tell you? why be it known to you then, that having spent the first part of my life in female vanities, the rest in domestic employments, I seem as if I had been measuring ribbon in a millener's, or counting pennyworths of figs, and weighing sugar candy in a grocer's shop all my life. If you envy me or know any one

who does, pray tell them this sad truth; nothing can be more sad, nothing can be more true. You will ask me what I shall do for the future? indeed I don't know, but what I don't like, I dare say; for so the destinies ordained ever since they began to spin my first mantua and petticoat, and so I suppose they will continue to devise till they "weave the warp, and "weave the woof," that is to make my "winding sheet." You despise, you say, all the old women who wish to be young; your contempt is very comprehensive, it takes in all the old women that ever were or will be, from before the flood to the final dissolution of this our globe. I will endeavour to satisfy your curiosity about your fellow-traveller. My amiable friend Mrs. Boscawen arrived yesterday; I look upon it as a fortunate omen, to begin my new year in her company; she is in her conversation every thing that can make the hours pass agreeably; I must be happier and I should be better for her friendship. I am solicitous to hear a better account of your health; I dare say Mrs.

Alexander, to whom I beg my compliments, repays, now you are ill, all the attendance you gave to her daughter. To the invincible Emin, and the indolent Torriano my compliments. When the 36th year of my age was almost expiring, I made excellent resolutions against the temptations of pen and ink; but, as it usually happens on such occasions, I have taken a new lease of old follies, and it is charitable to treat the understanding of a sick man with panada; when it is restored to its usual health and strength, I will recommend you again to your stage-coach companion, who talked sense all the way from Newbury to London, though it is 56 measured miles, if you only reckon from Speenhamland to Hyde Park Corner. I think this gentleman is as great a prodigy as your whale. I will end as I began, with good wishes to the day, and may we, as we begin to number our days, apply our hearts unto wisdom! We must mutually exhort each other so to do on this our common birth day, which has given each of us a friend; I speak this with sincerity,

and with confidence, trusting you are mine as I am your

affectionate friend,
and faithful humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

I am sorry Mr. Emin did not accompany Mrs. Boscawen hither; she would have been glad to have had him for a fellow traveller, as I should have had great pleasure in having him my guest.

To the Same.

Saturday Night, 16th of October, 1757.

DEAR DOCTOR,

I BELIEVE we are very wise in not wasting our time in writing letters; but did not the correspondence divert us? and had not we better be merry than wise? what says the climacteric? I will tell you what it should say:

'Tis time short pleasures now to take,
Of little life the best to make,
And manage wisely the last stake.

So, dear Doctor, lay down your prudence and take up your pen, and let me have a long letter by next post; and tell me all you hear of our sad and dire disgrace at Rochefort. I am desired to use my interest with you to send some powders for the rheumatism to my house in Hill-street, directed, if you please, to the reverend Mr. Robinson. I have got a little young rheumatism in my shoulder, when it is of age you shall have the pleasure of giving it some powder; in the mean time I will bestow a little patience upon it.

I am, dear Sir,
your most affectionate and
faithful humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

DEAR MADAM,

I STAND, in respect to my account with you, as the wicked do in regard to a

future state; I almost equally dread being annihilated in your memory, or condemned by the sentence that you must pass on me, if I exist there. Surely those only who are guilty of wilful sins can be desperate enough to wish for annihilation, and my transgressions have been involuntary! I have been carried about in the tourbillon of this town with such vehemence and rapidity, I knew not where I was, nor what I was doing. If I were to tell you in plain English I was distracted, I should say rather too much, if I were to use the phrase in the mitigated sense the French do, I fear I should say too little. I had always reason enough left me to represent to me how much happier I should have been by my quiet fireside with my dear Miss Carter, discoursing of persons and of times, whose follies, as their mortal parts, have been long dead and consigned to oblivion, but whose virtues and talents enjoy a sort of immortality, and of whom we know nothing but what we can reverence. No such party offered itself to me; written notes

fixed the destiny of the morning, and printed cards of the afternoon. I durst not have told you all this if you had been at Deal, taking your sober walk on the sea shore, but as this will probably be delivered to you in the pump-room at Bristol, the symphony of prate, laughter, and impertinence will soften and carry off my idle tale: when the music suits the words, all commend the harmony. I have sometimes had the vanity to hope you would not have required the form of a letter to induce you to let me know how the waters agreed with you and Miss Talbot. I enquired what accounts came of your health, and was told you were well; but don't you always say you are so? The state of indolence in which you described yourself to me, is so unnatural to your mind, I pity you, but I do not wonder at it. I have sometimes fallen into it. After long struggles of grief, the mind does not find its way back to joy, but sinks into indolence. The dissipations of a public place will for a time

encrease this disposition, but you will afterwards find yourself the better for the gentle weariness, the uninteresting occupations of Bristol. If you must gather posies on Parnassus, pray read Dr. Young's Letter on Original Composition; it abounds with the violets and primroses of a vernal imagination. The greatest fault of the piece is puerility, though the author is fourscore years old. He rather exhorts than teaches; he tells people they should strike out new paths in the land of science or imagination, but does not give any direction for travelling thither; he desires people to look sharp for genius, which he fancies many would find if they sought it; but that, in short, genius is but a needle, and learning is a bottle of hay, and so it must be long and diligently sought. The doctor was so positive in his assurances, that I set about seeking for my genius; and as I had bottled very little hay, hoped to find it presently; but I am no nearer the matter. Alas! what good would it do me if I

should find it, as Gammer Gurton does her needle, in the last act of the Drama. When I was young, I could have had the pleasure of being vain. As to such as you, who have much genius and no vanity, how I pity you! When you have read the Doctor's gay and fragrant posy, if you please, you may pick up some rank weeds of Voltaire's. There is the deadly night shade, the aconite and monk's-hood, and some of ill and disgusting odour, they grew on the banks of the fiery Phlegethon; Sisyphus rolled the garden, the rebel Titans planted, and the Furies watered them; the fumes of them are now intoxicating many weak brains in France and England. This work is called l'Optimisme; it is a ridicule on those who assert that doctrine; and as it is particularly maintained by the free-thinkers, who are not willing to own the necessity of a future state to justify providence, it may, in that respect, do some service; but it has an air of impiety and profligacy that is shocking. I think it has the most wit of any of his works. I believe it will

do more harm in France than England; it will incline people to Atheism. Our free-thinkers here are deluded by a specious demon; Satan, the rebel confess'd, is disclaimed; here pride, dress'd in the robes of philosophy, calls herself virtue, and draws many votaries, but in the Roman Catholic countries

> Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
> And unawares morality expires.
> Nor public flame, nor private dares to shine,
> Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!

I have wrote such an unreasonable long letter, that I ought to conclude this instant, but I must first desire you to take the first opportunity to present yourself to a most amiable and valuable friend of mine, who by this time is at Bristol; I mean Mrs. Pitt.* I could not give you her character in just colours and fair proportions unless I had found that genius which Dr. Young says we are all born with, but most have lost or mislaid; but thus far I will assure you, that the only fault I have found in her, is, that

* Mrs. Anne Pitt, sister to Lord Chatham.

when one is accustomed to her conversation, one knows not how to part with it, or change it for others. You will be afraid of her because she is a court lady. Her manners indeed are of a court, her sentiments still of higher extraction, and for wit, I doubt whether all the academies of belles lettres in the world can furnish so much. But it is your fault if you perceive it is wit; for my part, I always think I should have said what she did, if she had not by accident spoke it first; and she will say in three words what would fill a volume. Pray take her for your health and pleasure, she will revive you, and you will help to recover her; she is very ill; when you write let me know how she does. I told her you would tremble and hesitate, and blush and look as simple as ever you could for your life, when you introduced yourself. I have made your compliments to Lady Frances Williams, and your apology to Mrs. Stanley; all my friends lament your absence, but pardon me if I have the vanity to think I feel it most. I wish I

only admired you. Why love people an hundred miles off? When shall I enjoy your company every day for some months together? Is there so fair a page in the book of my destiny? I beg a very particular account of your health. I am very well, but still hoarse. Adieu! love me as much as you can, and I will love you as little as I can, and yet I shall be more than you are mine.

Yours, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill-street, 7th of June.

DEAR MADAM.

SEND me a better letter, yes, I say a better letter; do you think I care for your wit and your wisdom, when you won't tell me how you do? Direct your next to Madame Sevigné, in the shades, or to Madame Maintenon's spirit in the cloisters of St. Cyr, they will admire

your language, they will approve your sentiments, and being no longer of earth's mould, will feel none of the fears, the cares, that haunt a mortal woman for a mortal friend. What aggravates your guilt is, that I do suppose you are very well, and would not tell me so. The state of your body may be well, but for the state of your mind, what a farrago of vanity! what toys, what bagatelles must it be composed of, that you take such delight in the pump room! I suppose by this time you are famous there for the fluency of your small talk, the pertness of your repartee, and the flippancy of your dialogue; nay, for what I know, you may shine in equivoque and double entendre. I am glad Miss Talbot recovers so fast. I was always of opinion that the conversation of a reasonable, tender, sensible friend for her sick hours, and an ingenious learned companion for her better spirits, might have been of great service to her; so great was my zeal for her, I wished her such a person as could give dignity to the sentiments of

Epictetus, and write an introduction to the work, far better than all the productions of pagan wisdom: but in this strange world one is apt to take things too high. Miss Betsy Carter gay from a ball, and flippant from the pump-room, does just as well. I shall take my next measures several degrees below the sublime, then I may be on a level with experience, which the choice spirits and sublimated geniuses seldom are. I am glad you were enough in your sober senses to like my friend Mrs. Pitt. I could not help fancying I saw you sitting by her in the window, coughing, hemming, sneezing, and giving every sign of life but speaking. I do not wonder you found yourself so easy in the visit; extreme politeness comes nearest to extreme simplicity of manners; and indeed do not the utmost limits of improvement in every thing bring people near to where they set out? I am not satisfied with the accounts of Mrs. Pitt's health; do not let her drink too much Bristol water; there is no spring but that which you and nine other

virgins drink at, of which the deeper the draught, the safer the experiment. If you have not forgot your a b c, you may read Mr. Mason's Caractacus. It is a drama not dramatical; his Melpomene is too chaste and too cold for the theatre. She is a very modest virgin, pure in sentiment and diction, and void of passion; her sober ornaments are a Greek veil and some Druidical hieroglyphics, all which I mightily respect, and do not at all like. I do not mean to say the piece has not merit; it has a great deal; but on the whole I must own I am not fond of such compositions. I believe indeed they are designed for my betters in learning and taste. I rejoice that your brother is at Bristol. Pray make my best compliments to Mrs. and Miss Talbot, and Mrs. Pitt, and also to your brother; why was he not so good as to call upon me? I could have talked of you, and it is a subject that I believe I talk well upon, for my heart is as eloquent as any ones. I hope you will write to me soon, and pray tell me whether you like pompons or aigrettes

in the hair; if you put on rouge, dance minuets and cotillions, that I may describe and define you in your Bristol state. I ask a thousand pardons for detaining you so long from the pump room, but I hope it will make you some amends if I tell you Lord Northampton had a fine suit for the birth-day. The waistcoat silver and gold, the coat gold and silver. These must be interesting subjects to a Bristol belle. I am glad I have got a recipe from the Druids to exorcise and purify you when you leave Bristol. I must sprinkle you with Druid holy water, I must dash some

> "boughs of vervain blue,
> dipt in cold September dew,"

full in your face, and you will read Plato again with your wonted sobriety. In the mean time, in hopes of better days,

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 25th of July.

My dear Friend,

Will your head never be cured of those painful diseases thinking and aching? Cannot the long room remove the first of these maladies, and the pump the second? Alas, no! our perfections and imperfections are more intimately united, and more closely woven into our frame than we are apt to imagine; the destinies dye the wool before they spin our thread; they use none but grain colours, and sun, wind, and rain, and the force of external accidents operate but little. Hypatia would have been a philosopher, and Sappho a wit, though they had been educated at a French boarding-school at Chelsea or Kensington; and Helen a —— in the college of Vestals. You was destined to have wisdom and the headach, and all the folly of the multitude, and

the knowledge of physicians cannot prevent it. Perhaps on the delicacy of the same fine nerve depends your acute reasoning and acute pain. These opiniative spinsters have so tinctured my opinions that I envy you one half the day and pity you the other half; and whether you wind my worsted round the groves at Sandleford, or fasten it to a Chinese chair in Hill-street, it cannot be altered a shade in either of these respects. I shall love, admire, and pity you wherever I am, and should tell you so oftener if I were not afraid to solicit your correspondence when this grievous headach might make it painful and hurtful to you. I flatter myself that you would not leave Bristol without intimating to me how and when I might see you. I am now most happily situated to catch an interview. Sandleford is but little more than a mile from Newbury, and I hope you will use your interest with Mrs. Talbot and Miss Talbot to make this their inn. I will undertake to give them beds well aired and more quiet than at the Pelican or New

Inn; but, what is to them the strongest invitation, is the happiness they would give me by such a visit. If I could persuade my dear Miss Carter to stay here with me how happy should I think myself; but do not be afraid of coming hither lest I should urge this with too much importunity, for favours to myself I have some modesty in asking. I am at present very happy in the hopes of seeing Mrs. Pitt; I expect her here to-morrow or next day; you know her so well I need not say much to convince you of my joy on such an opportunity of enjoying her conversation, and I imagine she will now love me, as the friend of Miss Carter. All her letters expressed the highest pleasure in your acquaintance, so I have made two people happy who are formed to make every one so.

Mr. Montagu was detained in town by various affairs and accidents till Thursday last. My joy at being at last released from the heat and hurry of London was entirely overcast by the death of Lady E——. The sense of Lady F——

W———'s affliction sat heavy on my mind. The news of it was brought me just as I was setting out, and it spoiled my partaking of the general joy diffused so bountifully through the whole creation on a fine summer's day. A fever, added to the maladies of a lying-in, hurried off Lady E—— in three days. The fondness of a mother and the opinions of a Christian were all shocked at the rapidity of this accident, which hurried this gay young creature out of the world in all the jollity of her May-day morning. In vain had education endeavoured to give her a solidity of character; she was carried by the force of fashion down the stream of pleasure fast and far. As her faults were those that arise from levity not wickedness, one had hopes she would in time grow more prudent and despise those follies she had caught by the infection of the world. I have had accounts of Lady Frances' health, and much fear the weight of this affliction, and the rapidity with which it came will overwhelm her. She has indeed the best

support, a firm and rational piety, but her heart doated on this daughter.

I am glad you agree with me in detestation of Voltaire's Optimism. Are not you provoked that such an animal calls itself a philosopher? what pretence can he have to philosophy who has not that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom? This creature is a downright rebel to his God. Some good may arise indeed from the division of Satan's household; Voltaire directly opposes Lord Bolingbroke, and those who affirm whatever is is right, and that there wants not a future state to make the system just. Lord, what is man! that he shall reject the offer of another world or the enjoyment of this, as pleases his humour and serves his book.

I rejoice that Miss Talbot is so recovered, but let her health be ever so perfect I should be more afraid of the strength of her arguments than her voice. I am glad I shall have your brother on my side, it is lucky for me and my cause.

Yours, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 24th.

MY DEAR MISS CARTER,

WHILE your sentimental melancholy is distressed where to lay its head, and justly disdains to pillow itself on an artichoke or cabbage, I have been so anxious and uneasy about you, that banks of pinks, and pansies, and rosy bowers, have not been able to give my mind repose. I was miserable for fear you were sick, jealous lest you had passed by, suspicious my letter had not come to your hands, and full of those thousand fantastic cares that afflict the feeling heart. I was just returned from a country visit to which civility impelled me, and where nonchalance and ennui sat by my side, and weariness accompanied me home; when on my arrival your letter saluted me. Adieu! nonchalance, ennui, weariness, and all that noble apathy I had possessed during the course of the day.

My spirits fluttered on the sight of your hand, and I longed with impatience to know when and how long I might see you; and, alas! I find it will be like a mere vision bright and transient. I am not going your road, I am not your aunt, and I do not live in Kent; and on these circumstances I am condemned, and upon my word I am not to blame in any of these things; I wish I was going your road, and I should be very glad to be your aunt, and I could like to live in Kent. What, punish one for what one cannot help? Seriously speaking, I should have been happy to the highest degree if dear Miss Carter would have given me her company here. To have you with one in the even regularity of a country life undisturbed by crowds, follies, and fopperies, would have been such a sober certainty of waking bliss as would have been more pleasing to me than all the gay dreams of the world; but, alas! it is not my fate to be thus really happy; Dame Fortune gives me some of her bawbles to play with sometimes out of her

trinket box, but of her substantial gifts she is a little niggardly. I am very glad you are acquainted with Mrs. Howe, and do not wonder you are charmed with her. There is an inexpressible magnanimity about her without any thing fierce or masculine.* Pray would not she have made a good wife for your friend Epaminondas? Is not she a little à la Grecque? I should depreciate her if I said Roman. Pray exhort her to call on me, it would give me great pleasure. By the by, are not the Howes a truly noble family? they are really an honour to their country! How it grieves one that their public virtue has occasioned their private loss; yet how much happier is the late Lord Howe, embalmed in the tears of his countrymen, than those who have meanly preserved an inglorious existence? I agree with you entirely that there is more easy and unrestrained conversation in a ball-room at a water-drinking place than in visits in town. There is a certain visiting tone,

* This lady is still living, and continues to be endowed with the faculties ascribed to her.

and few dare strike above it: the most fashionable fool in the company sets the tune to the key of their own voice, as the parish clerk does with a pitch pipe; and it is no matter what is the strength and power of your organs, you are to strain till you scream, or mutter till you are hoarse, as pleases the leader of the chorus. I had the pleasure of Mrs. Pitt's company here some days, you will believe they passed very rapidly. I went with her to Maidenhead Bridge, staid there all night, but in the morning she went on to Kensington, and I returned to Sandleford, but in my way dined at Mrs. Clayton's, at Harleyford, a very sweet place, and a most agreeable house, of which your friend Mrs. Howe's consort was the architect; I never saw a more convenient and pleasant habitation with the nobleness of greatness in moderate space, which is certainly the perfection of architecture. You may believe that when I parted with Mrs. Pitt I would have laid a good wager the day could not pass very pleasantly; but, on the contrary, Mrs. Clayton, and

Mrs. Southwell, and the river Thames, and green banks, and fine wood, and gay prospects, did altogether give me one of the most agreeable day-dreams I ever had. Dr. Monsey, who is with me, had a letter last post from the great Emin at Florence, where he has had a terrible pleurisy. He will stay at Florence till he is recovered, and then go on to encounter various perils. He has written a long letter to the noble daughters of Britain, of which Miss Talbot shall have a copy. It is designed for her, Lady Sophia Egerton, and Lady Anson, and your humble servant. His letter is partly unintelligible from the defect of his English, and partly from a certain Asiatic flightiness.

I am just preparing to carry Dr. Monsey to see Donnington Castle, formerly the abode of the great Chaucer. The last owner was a drunken squire who changed the docte et sainte ivresse of Helicon to downright stupid sottishness. The present possessor is a very good sort of young man, but drinks not Helicon and

wine, but pump water and wine, like other good folks. I entreat you to give me notice of your coming, for should I miss you I should be peevish for a week and melancholy for a month. Pray cease not your exhortations to Mrs. Howe to do me the honour and pleasure to call here. Mrs. Southwell was so good as to spend a few days here on her way to King's Weston. Pray make my compliments to Mrs. Talbot and Miss Talbot. I have a good mind not to own to you that I have been very well ever since I came hither except a few days last week, as you don't mention your own health. Adieu! dear madam, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

The 15th, 1759.

MY dear friend's letter gave me much concern. I had flattered myself that the variety and dissipation of Bristol would have diverted and dispelled any shade of

melancholy that was thrown over your mind by domestic afflictions; and, alas! here is another. When I lost my mother the same thought occurred to me as does to you, that her children being many of them grown up, and some established in the world, the labour of life was over, and she was arrived at a period in which she might reap the harvest of her care and toil, and with pleasure look on that prosperity of her children which of all human means was most owing to her prudence and merit. This consideration even aggravated the loss of the best parent and the best woman I ever knew: but two years were not passed before the death of the most promising of her children, and indeed one who was already arrived to such credit and esteem in his profession as left no room to doubt he would have arrived at the best honour of it, made me see how ill one judges of the elements of human life if one predicts a season of constant sunshine. Our mothers, my friend, are where there is peace and rest indeed; if they were with us we

might hope it for them, but could never be sure of it. I have heard much of your goodness to this mother-in-law; I am glad to find she deserved it, for though her merit encreases your regret, it softens it; and lasting comfort is derived from an assurance of the virtue of a departed friend. I feel myself obliged to your father for not suffering you to come home till the family is composed. You are wanting to your friends in nothing but a due care of yourself.

The sunshine of yesterday and to day has been of great service to me; there is not any restorative cordial so reviving to my spirits as a walk in a fine day. The goddess of health seems then to have diffused her blessings around, and nothing appears languid or valetudinarian. We catch the spirit of joy by contagion, a sigh appears blasphemy, and a groan rebellion. We imbibe content at the fountain of universal good, and if we came out with the dejection of an invalid, we return home with the joy of a seraph.

My dear Mrs. Carter need not make

any apology for telling me her griefs; it is only to the sympathizing heart one has a consolation in relating them, and whatever expresses your confidence in my affection, does me justice, and does me honour. I am charmed with the verses of the Italian poet. You will perhaps be surprized to hear your laughing friend declare affliction has taught her heart to repeat the notes of woe more faithfully, than songs of joy, to which her disposition was more tuned by nature.

am much delighted to hear so good an account of Miss Talbot. Adieu my very dear friend! Take care of your health and spirits, in which no one is more tenderly interested than

your most affectionate

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill-street, 24, 1759.

I AM much obliged to my dear Miss Carter for her kind compliance with my request to let me hear from her. When requests are not founded in deserts, one fears for the success of them, and I was conscious I did not merit such an indulgence. I almost wish I could read with more confidence your modest renunciation of perfection. I wish I could be sure you stood in need of some indulgence sometimes. I could then enter into an alliance with you of the strictest kind; I was born faulty, feeble, apt to offend, and ready to forgive. I am indulgent, ready made to your hand; your conversation, and even example, will never make me perfect, so, dear Madam, if you have any faults keep them for me; let them be part of our treaty, and reserve your unallay'd perfections for these high potentates dans la morale who have no weaknesses. Adamant is finer than

diamond, but it is fit only to make palaces in the sky. We have no tools that will work upon it. If one could find absolute perfection in a human creature one could never shape it into a friend: our weaknesses are penetrable; wisdom unallayed is of a great resistance, it must be incorporated with a softer metal before it will take an impression. Let the virtuosi lock up in their cabinets the stubborn ore, but give me the gold and the merit that is brought to the standard of use. I am a little fearful that what you call faults in yourself, I have called virtues, when I have found them in my own mind; particularly when you accuse yourself of a wild and untractable love of liberty, because you want a place where you can enjoy some hours every day uninterrupted. This is my own turn, and I thought it an excellence, a perfection, and almost a virtue; I have sometimes in an humble hour, or rather in a complaisant one, asked pardon for it of my friends, and owned my nature had something farouche in it which the usage

of the world had not tamed. But, seriously speaking, how necessary to health, and virtue too, is repose and reflection? as much as I wish to see you, I would not desire it on any terms that should lay you under such constraint as you would feel if you had not a home.

There is a letter from Rousseau to M. D'Alembert upon the project of settling a theatre at Geneva, which treats of dramatical performances in general: it is ingeniously written, and with great eloquence. The author wrote before to prove the savage state preferable to civil society. He is a stranger to the sweet civilities of life; whatever is gentle he thinks weak; he seems to have principles of justice and integrity, so we must call him honest Bruin. I should have sent you that and Dr. Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, if I had not waited for the binding of Leland's Life of Philip of Macedon. I design they should all come down to you as soon as I can get the latter. I do not know whether you have the first volume of Dr. Newton, but at a venture

would have sent it you, but could not get one. There is a new edition of it in the press—when finished you shall have it; as you have undoubtedly read it, you will in the mean time be able to follow the thread through these later volumes. Lord Lyttelton's History is not yet ready to appear, the work goes on slowly, as the writer is scrupulously exact in following truth. His delicacy in regard to characters, his candour in regard to opinions, his precision in facts, would entitle him to the best palm history can claim, if he had not added to these virtues of history, if I may call them so, the highest ornaments of style, and a most peculiar grace of order and method. You will find this most unlike to modern history, where the muses of memory are made like old maids to scold and talk scandal, and repeat the lie of the day. Lord Lyttelton often enquires after you, and charged me to present his best compliments; he was flattered that you enquired after his work: he is indeed writing for you and such as you, but most readers want to

find history a smart libel on former times and persons. I shall send you a treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful, by Mr. Burke, a friend of mine. I do not know that you will always subscribe to his system, but I think you will find him an elegant and ingenious writer. He is far from the pert pedantry and assuming ignorance of modern witlings; but in conversation and writing, an ingenious and ingenuous man, modest and delicate, and on great and serious subjects full of that respect and veneration which a good mind and a great one is sure to feel, while fools rush behind the altar at which wise men kneel and pay mysterious reverence. As you have all the keys that unlock the treasures of antiquity, you will perhaps despise my tribute from the press, but Dr. Newton's is a subject will interest you, and I believe it is well treated, at least I thought so in his first book. I have not read these. Mr. Burke's is a method of analyzing, so you may try his process on your Grecian friends. Longinus has only told us what is sublime,

not how it is so. I imagine he must be a charming writer in his native Greek, though by Boileau's translation, I think what Mr. Pope says of him is both a panegyric and a criticism; that he is himself the great sublime he draws, is a testimony of his being a fine writer, but the attention he has to being sublime, makes him not so good a teacher; at least in Boileau it appeared so to me. How is it that Tully makes his style fit equally to every subject? The precise moralist, the discussing philosopher, and the angry consul, are never more nicely adapted than when he shifts into the lame and slippered pantaloon, and relaxing the nerves of style speaks the language of the mitigated meliorated passions of mild old age. I hope I have by this last panegyric atoned a little for my pertness in regard to Longinus, whom the French translation has made me consider as a diseur de bons mots. Don't be angry! "brave ords indeed," as Fluellen says, but I think it the glory of the ancients that they seemed to write to the purpose and not to applause. I

have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Talbot twice, I wish I could give a perfect good account of her health, but it is too delicate; and I suspect her great tenderness to her friends makes her hide little disorders which she should attend to. She is certainly much better, and I hope the spring will entirely restore her health. You kindly enquire after mine, which is better worth the notice than it usually is; thank God I have been extremely well of late, except a transient cold and rheumatism; my voice is still in the raven key, my throat not having quite recovered the effects of eau de luce, I beg you would never let it approach you when you have the headache. The great affair at Lisbon is not entirely understood; some say it is made of the dire ingredients of criminal love, ambition of regal power, and popular discontent, these, stirred up by Jesuit art, produced assassination. It is no wonder such materials in the hands of such artists should effect the ugliest of forms. I shall send my parcel by the Deal coach, as soon

as the bookseller will give the great Philip a coat. I hear the work commended by persons of great judgment; I should think it difficult for a mere speculative savant to enter into the depth of Philip's policy. If Mr. Leland is a good journalist of the man, and a good gazetteer of the times, which I do not doubt, he may give one entertainment, though he should not be of the cabinet council. May health be of your morning's walk, and sit down with you at the fireside in an evening, but indeed variety and dissipation would be your best remedies; you will think I prescribe like other doctors for the sake of the fee; I am like some of the honestest of the faculty, I desire health for you and the fee for myself, I wish both earnestly; if you would have me better you must come and teach me. If you are really indolent you will come to town to get rid of such a troublesome correspondent. I presume on the length of the evenings, and sometimes on a state of health which will not allow you to apply to things very serious or

very lively. If I should write on to the bottom of the second sheet, you will think I do it out of revenge for your staying in the country, so I will take my leave here, with some appearance of moderation; and with much real esteem and affection

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I SHOULD make some apology for not having answered your letter, if I did not consider that an invalid is not a moral and accountable agent. It is a poor animal that has not ease enough to sleep, nor spirits enough to be awake, but with eyes half shut, half open, passes its time in a situation of mind between thought and delirium, to which the polite give the name of reverie. It is not a correspondent for it cannot write, nor a friend, for

it is not useful or agreeable; it spoils a party of pleasure, embarrasses any business that is going forward, and to all the purposes of the word is as if it did not exist. In the order of beings it stands behind the half human Chimpanzee, the lively marmoset, and the loquacious parrot, and I believe ranks next to a creature you will find in my friend Mr. Stillingfleet's book, under the name of *Sloth*, which he represents to be without any quality that could make it loved, feared, or desired, but by certain piteous tones it moves compassion, and makes every one avoid hurting it: you may be assured that I am ready to claim all the privileges of my sister Sloth, and "stooping to your clemency expect your answer presently."

There is a novel published which I believe to be chiefly written by your friend Mrs. Fielding. It is called the Penitents, and is supposed to be the history of the unhappy fair ones in the Magdalen house. It is written with a good intention, and a spirit of piety; and as all the girls in

England are reading novels, it may be useful to put them upon their guard. Those who swallow poison should take antidotes; but happier are they, who, not tasting the first, need not trust to the precarious effects of the latter. In the most delicate writers, sin is represented as alluring, and the reader as well as the writer falls into the passion before she arrives at the penitence. If I had a daughter I should rather trust her to ignorance and innocence, than to the effect of these cautions. I think too it is difficult to write, so as to make the innocent enough apprehensive of guilt, without making those who have unhappily fallen into it desperate. The history of the Penitents is managed with great delicacy, and the style does not run quite so vagrant as is usual in these kind of performances.

We are all impatient to hear that Sir Edward Hawke has beaten the French. I should have had great anxieties for Deal, if I had apprehended any probability of their landing there. I wish to hear of your being in good health and spirits,

but have uneasy apprehensions on this important subject. I thank you for the verses, which I much like. During my little fever I found some leisure to read. Our friend Mrs. Pitt is pretty well, and asserts that she loves as much as she admires you, and both in the supreme degree. She is to dine and spend the day with me. The hero, Clive, has given Emin's father £700. towards his losses at Calcutta. I hope you admire Admiral Saunders for his alacrity in serving his country. Though this is the land of heroes I wish for a good peace: but between avarice and pride how should the world have peace?

I am, dear Madam, yours, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

MY DEAR MISS CARTER,

NEITHER philosopher nor pipkin could behave worse to you than I have done of

late, but I assure you I am not made of their hard ware. My eyes no sooner got well, than I was seized with the rheumatism, and could not bear the writing posture. As soon as I grew better, Mr. Montagu fell ill of a violent cough, and kept his room three weeks. The offices of nurse and secretary, for I am both to him, have so filled all my time, that except for purposes of business, I have lived without benefit of clergy. Your letter last night gave me most sincere pleasure; I imagined you thought I was grown a brute, and, unless you could make a good fable of my metamorphosis, would, have nothing to say to me. Miss Talbot called on me the other day when I was just gone to Lady Frances Williams, who came to town the night before. I had not seen her since the death of Lady Essex, so the meeting was painful; but she bore up better than I expected, and I have the comfort of finding her less dejected than I feared. I do not imagine that after such a shock she will ever be capable of the lively joy, which the mind

feels before it has tasted such deadly sorrow: but I really hope she will recover a sort of tranquillity. In the great Palais de la tristesse there are very different apartments; some are utterly dark and comfortless; others admit a twilight in which no object appears brilliant or gaily coloured, but where the true shape and form of things appear. Sickness and age, and, most of all, sorrow, may soon change the gay picture to mere black and white, and one is surprized to find there is so little beauty in the mere outline of what appeared so charming when coloured: but if the things of this world do not assume a terrible form, or become obliterated by grief. I do not know whether the evil be so great to a Christian. The undazzled sight will look onward to an eternity where no shadows, no delusive joys await our coming; and we shall thank the voice that told us what we gazed on enamoured, was an unsubstantial shadow. Here I was interrupted by a visit from my friend Mr. Burke. It is a noble privilege in a

London life that one can never be too long in the same temper; whether willingly or unwillingly, one must steer "from grave to gay, from lively to severe." I am very glad you liked Mr. Burke's book, he is as good and worthy as he is ingenious. The press has not furnished us with anything of late worthy your attention, nor have the geniuses of France sent their wit to the mint to be made into currency, as the rich have their plate. I was very happy when I last saw Miss Talbot to find her health so established; I look upon her life as a public concern, for she is ever ready to relieve distress and protect merit, and she gives a sweet example to the world of the amiableness of virtue.

I am yours, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Lord Lyttelton.

Tuesday 9.

My Lord.

If the sentiment of gratitude would not pass for payment with generous benefactors, how embarrassed would Lord Lyttelton's correspondents be to acquit themselves of their obligations to him! but, when I have told your Lordship that your letter gave me great pleasure, and that I return most grateful thanks for it, a sense of the favour remains, but it appears no longer a demand unsatisfied, though it is a debt I cannot pay. I have enclosed a letter I received from Emin last post: I am sure your Lordship will approve his not returning to England, and particularly his delicacy in not exposing his friends to the imputation of having protected an impostor. You will find his mind is still at the top of the heroic strain. An Asiatic, a savage, and a hero, in a fever, is a very terrible animal. Love of fame, and ambition of conquest, give

delirium enough without an inflammation of the blood, and the natives of the warm climates seem at best hardly in sober senses. I wish your Lordship would write to him. He takes my letter very kindly, though it run directly against the grain of his heroism; but he may think what I say to him is dictated by the weakness and timidity of an effeminate mind. He knows your Lordship's is capable of no fear, but that "which is the beginning of wisdom."

I had a very obliging letter from Mrs. Lyttelton last post, for we have corresponded since Dr. T—'s proposal. At the same time I had a letter from Mr. Tom Pitt, with a postcript from the Dean of Exeter, who I believe had not heard of the death of the Bishop of Worcester. I wish the lawn sleeves may be now prepared for my friend. I hope your lordship found Mrs. Pitt improved in health, one has nothing else to wish for her. She is formed for society in a very peculiar manner; no one puts more wit, vivacity, and politeness, into general conversation,

and the depth, acuteness, and finesse of her understanding make her charming in a tête à tête.

I propose to be in town on Saturday, but if any thing should defer my journey, your Lordship shall hear from me again; but as I had much rather have the pleasure of seeing you than of writing to you, I hope I shall not have so good an excuse to trouble you with another letter, but vivâ voce wish you a good journey to Hagley.

I had by mistake left Strada's Prolusions in town, so that I have not read them. I think your Lordship has an interest in wishing your friends to study the art of writing history. From Rapin one may extract an éloge of the History of Henry the Second. I am much pleased with the subjects of Busbequius's letters and his manner; he tells the story of Mustapha and his son with the brevity of a letter writer and the dignity of an historian. It is strange that princes do not think it worth their while to send men of genius well pensioned, to learn whatever is ex-

traordinary and good in the constitutions and customs of distant nations. When I am queen of the East I shall send a naturalist, a politician, and a man of sense, into every country in the world. The two first shall write memoirs and the third his annotations upon them. The Dean of Exeter and Mr. Tom Pitt have been at Sir Edward Lyttelton's in Staffordshire.

I am, my Lord, yours, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, 24, 1759.

MY LORD.

I SHALL appeal to your Lordship as a philosopher, and enquire of you as my friend, why my mind will not stay at home in its own mansion, but runs about seeking its fortune in other people's weal or woe. It might indolently have reposed at Sandleford ever since last Thurs-

day, and looking out of its window, the eyes, have quietly contemplated a very pretty prospect of green fields, russet lawns, and fallows gray; but unhappily, it took its flight to Berkely Square to mourn with Lady Frances Williams; and is only just now making itself amends for those heavy hours by meeting you at Hagley, surveying with you your new magnificent edifice, the beauties of your park, and with far more intense delight partaking of your joy at seeing your dear son, in whom any parent would be happy, but most of all such a father as your Lordship, who are sure his affection, respect, and obedience to you, will be in proportion to his virtue and merit: for how much does he owe to you? an elevation of rank, a fine house, and much more than these advantages, the best example for his guide at home, and your name as a herald to proclaim him with a title to esteem at his first appearance in the world, make him beloved before he is known and approved, before he has opportunities to exert his virtues and talents.

As my mind disdains its own cottage and petty domains, for charity's sake take in the poor traveller, let it feast on your happiness, and permit it to sit down with your Lordship and Mr. Lyttelton under the shade of the Hagley oaks: like your son they are excellent in themselves, but will derive additional honour from you: time and fine growth give them dignity with the present age, but the having been your Lordship's will make them sacred with posterity: if there be one more noble than the rest, the honour of having shaded Lord Lyttelton while he wrote his History of Henry the Second will be ascribed to it, and every genius devoted to the daughters of memory will make a pilgrimage thither. Chaucer's and Sydney's oaks grew in the light soil of fancy and fable, and like mere beauties flourished awhile, then faded. The historical plants have their root in the terra firma of truth and wisdom, and are for ever preserved with veneration; while those springing merely from fancy, and fashioned by the mode of the times, like our evergreens cut

into the shape of monkeys and bears, are destroyed by. the alteration of fashion and taste. The next noblest tree in our British forest will be Mr. Robertson's Scotch fir, a plant of elevated growth, strength, and vigour, and such as may endure some centuries, but must wave its high top, in sign of worship wave, to our Hagley oak; for though this fair fir abounds in the essential oil that preserves from decay, has vigour and strength, and adorns and does honour to the rude soil from whence it sprang, yet it has not the beauty and sublimity of the oak; its roots do not strike to the centre, nor its head reach to heaven, nor are its colours glowing and vivid, with varying light and shade, and ten thousand graces of form and varieties of figure, which charm the eye of the connoisseur, and make it equal to the loveliest that ever grew in the groves of ancient Italy or Greece.

I have hourly hopes of seeing Mrs. Pitt in her return from Bath, she is one of the very few to whom I would give any share of my leisure; between exercise

and reading I can divide my time very well. I had a letter from Monsey last post, but he was not in good spirits. As my mind is looking through a telescope at distant objects, his is continually using a microscope to small ones; and by that help sees great monsters in atoms, invisible to the naked eye. His life is a comedie larmoyante! Nemesis need never put herself to the expense of a misfortune for him; he can be unhappy without the least real evil: his sorrow, like his mirth, has more wit than judgment in it. I am afraid the disposition to be vexed will strengthen as he grows old. I never saw more tormenting spleen than he is subject to, but when I am with him I can always laugh him into reason, or reason him into laughing again. I beg of your Lordship to make my most affectionate compliments to Mrs. Hood, to whom I will write very soon; I should have done it on my coming hither, if my spirits had not been in a state that required to be amused, and in such cases reading is better than writing. I flatter myself that

your Lordship will let me have the pleasure of a line from you before you leave Hagley, with a particular account of your health; mine is perfectly good. I am at breakfast in the garden a little after eight, and afterwards in the woods when the sun grows too powerful. A thousand thanks for the lampreys, I would have given you a million, if you had sent the History, but I fear I shall be disappointed of it for the present. Say every thing that is affectionate to Mr. Lyttelton for me. I hope he will have a great deal of pleasure in his northern tour.

I am, yours, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 28th of August, 1759.

MY LORD.

A LITTLE more than a month after I left London I had the honour of a letter from

your Lordship, which I intended to answer as soon as I understood you were quietly settled at Hagley; but having received a second favour from you by the last post, I cannot so long defer my acknowledgments. Your Lordship's commendations of Mr. Lyttelton not only make me happy but make me vain. He is every day going on to complete all I have wished and predicted on his subject. I am very glad to find that he falls with such alacrity into the amusement of the company he is in; perhaps to travel through the world with pleasure to oneself, and the general good will of others, one had better speak the lingua franca, though a debased and coarse language, yet universally intelligible, than the Greek of Plato. To be universally liked, a person must be able to take a part in the amusements and employments of the company he happens to be in; but such compliance receives additional merit, and is accounted double courtesy, where a character of high accomplishments might naturally give a disdain of frivolous amusements. The

first business is to raise and ennoble the mind, the next to teach it affability to its inferiors. I should imagine your Lordship was well enough acquainted with the epistolary genius of our friend Monsey, to know he would rather give one a dissertation on the Præadamites, or his thoughts on the Millenium, or any subject in which his imagination, like a great leviathan, might take its pastime in the ocean of conjecture, than talk of human affairs and what related to ones friends. The Doctor came hither the day before Mr. Montagu fell ill. I do not know whether he did not catch cold at the top of the highest and bleakest hill in this country, where a Mr. Cottington took it into his head to build a seat at great expence. He could not expect even a Scotch fir to vegetate in so bleak and barren a place; and for neighbours he could hope for none but the crows or choughs that wing the midway air. It would have been a good situation for a college of augurs: for here they might conveniently make observations on the

flight of birds; but it is far from the cheerful haunt of men. The ascent is so steep a goat can hardly climb up to it, but as Mr. Cottington was an admirer of prospects, he built a belvedere at the top of the house, where, perhaps, he hoped to sit as umpire in the battles between the cranes and the pigmies; for as to looking down from it, it is rather horrible. In this place Dr. Monsey and Mr. Montagu spent some time; I found the wind so blustering, and the view so tremendous, I quitted it immediately. A few days ago Dr. Monsey had a letter from Mr. Emin at Florence. He enclosed to the Doctor, a magnificent epistle to the noble daughters of Britain, his friends: as he approaches nearer to his native woods and deserts he grows more savage. There is a sort of wildness in his letter that speaks the hero untamed. I believe he was more shocked at the apprehension of having his fame, than his life, abridged. Though the wise man says death is bitter to those who live at ease, yet it must be far more terrible to any one who has

"scorned delight and lived laborious days" in order to attain some great and noble end, and is perhaps on the eve of glory and success, and the

> "fair guerdon when they hope to find,
> And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
> Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears,
> And slits the thin-spun life."

Whenever I read the conclusion of the history of Henry the IV. of France, and my mind is worked up to a vast expectation of what the great soul of Henry, and the provident wisdom of Sully are forming, and when I see great treasures collected, great armaments made, ambition, courage, and wisdom, sitting in council for the execution of a vast design, and all these great things destroyed by one blow of a little instrument, which seemed fitter to force open the house of an oyster than to put an end to all that the wisdom and might of a great king and his council could contrive and achieve, I look as foolish and disappointed as Sir Epicure Mammon, when the crucible, in which he thought the gold was forming, bursts, and

the treasure he expected evaporates in smoke. Alas! we are all alchymists! we laboriously and greedily collect those ingredients of which we think happiness and glory are made, but, when we are expecting the completion of our scheme, by some inevitable accident in the process, the vessel of expectation bursts, and we have little but smoke for our pains; however, I do not think it adviseable to quarrel with Hope, though one knows he is an impostor; for in ordinary life he sells pleasant dreams at reasonable rates; those that traffic with him for empires must pay a great sum on bad security.

Your Lordship will believe I am very happy in having Dr. Monsey with us; he is in fine spirits, and amazes my country neighbours with his wit; I see that the most stupid of them are in doubt, whether he makes them laugh by being more witty or more foolish than they are; for humour is wit in masquerade, and if she asked the generality of people the masque question, "Do you know me?" they would answer No! Mrs. Southwell

was so good as to spend a few days with me in her way to Kingsweston, and I have hopes of a visit from Miss Carter when Miss Talbot returns to London, and Mrs. Howe, a very agreeable woman, sister to Lord Howe, who is now at Bristol, says she will take Sandleford in her way. I congratulate your Lordship on Prince Ferdinand's success, and I condole with you for the King of Prussia's misfortunes. I have not seen Studley Park these sixteen years; when I saw it, art had done nature great violence and injury. I beg my compliments to Mr. Lyttelton, and entreat him not to be rash, though I allow him to be bold on horseback; but he must be careful not to disappoint his friends of the great hopes they have of him, by a five-barred gate or a ditch. I beg that your Lordship will not think that because I complained you did not write in a month, I expect you should write once a week. You have now atoned for all omissions, and till you are settled and at leisure, may employ Mr. Lyttelton as your secretary. I ima-

gine you have frequent accounts of Mrs. Stanley from her daughters. I flatter myself she is mending. Poor Lady Williams is still inconsolable.

I am, my Lord,
Yours, &c.
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

September 16th.

MY LORD,

THE last post brought me the agreeable favour of your Lordship's letter from Inverary. I think the Duke of Argyle was in very agreeable circumstances, while he was looking on his vast territory and the rude magnificences of nature, and at the same time attending to the conversation of a guest polished by all the fine arts of life, and adorned by every gentle virtue. As king of the Goths* I do not so much envy him; a cold climate, rude in-

* The reader will recollect the early period at which these letters were written, before Scotland had been so

habitants, a soil uncultivated, and all the accompaniments of savage greatness may please surly and solitary pride, but I think his Grace of Argyle is much in the right to rule there by a viceroy, the greatest part of the year, and enjoy the comforts of being a subject of England for the rest. I am extremely glad to find your journey has answered so well. The natives of those countries do not know that their beauties are best understood by persons of delicacy and refinement. The organs must be in perfection to judge of all the tones of a trumpet as well as to hear the whisperings of a lute? I would tell these Goths they were fortunate in having an Attic guest. If I were a little younger, I should be terribly jealous of the court the northern ladies have paid to your son. I imagine my letter would not overtake you at Durham, so I shall send it to York. I expect your Lordship will be much pleased with the cathe-

much visited, and when the opinions of the barbarism of the Highlanders might be more reasonably entertained than at present.

dral; I have not seen any building of that kind so noble. King's College Chapel at Cambridge is perhaps more beautiful and elegant, but greatness is the first merit in this species of architecture. Mr. Burke, who makes magnitude the legitimate parent of the sublime, would admire it. I shall be glad to hear that your Lordship and Mr. Lyttelton like York, to which perhaps I am partial as to the place of my nativity. One of the strongest pictures in my mind is the funeral of a dean of York, which I saw perform'd with great solemnity in the cathedral when I was about four years old; whether the memory of it added to the present objects, may not have made the place appear the more awful to me, I do not know, but I was never so affected by any edifice. I had a letter the other day from Mrs. H——, who is now bathing in the sea near Exeter. She had been at Portsmouth to see her husband, and is waiting for his return. Her letter breathes nothing but love and rapture. Never was the benediction better bestowed; she

really knows the value of a good husband, and she speaks too with great sensibility of the refined pleasure of giving delight. She has none of the doubts and fears of timid love, but enjoys a happy consciousness of the power of pleasing, and I really believe will celebrate her grand climacteric with a love feast. Good Admiral S——, having by vulgar reckoning considered how many computed miles from Hagley to Portsmouth, dissuaded her from going thither at Captain H——'s arrival, by which seven golden days were lost; for till she had a letter full of amorous impatience from her deary she did not set out. The resentment with which she speaks of the Admiral's ill council, and the regret she expresses for those seven days, is remarkable. I have advised her never on the like occasion to call sober sixty into her counsels, but to consult the little Loves and gay Desires. I had the pleasure of seeing Miss Carter in her way from Bristol. Mr. Montagu's health being still very unsettled, I do not know whether we shall be in town so

soon as the 27th. My sister and three of my brothers are with me; my sister's health is but indifferent. Your Lordship is so good as to enquire after mine, which, thank God, is as good as I could expect. I know, my Lord, you will rejoice with me for Mr. Boscawen's victory, both from public spirit and private friendship. I am told that Leicester House takes the part of Lord G. S. As I have seen Mr. Legge applauded, addressed, and huzzaed for patriotism, I should not be surprized to see Lord G. S. adored for valour, and sprigs of laurel sent him from all the cities and boroughs in England. If Mr. Lyttelton does not write me an account of his progress through Scotland, I shall be very jealous lest some nymph there, whose face has seen fewer winters, and no summer's sun, has made him inconstant to me. Till I have his letters, I amuse myself with those of Busbequius, which you were so good as to lend me, I am much entertained with them, and I shall read Mr. Lyttelton's with more interest; but it is strange how the habit of considering

times and things remote, makes one enter into the spirit of a narration. I imagine much of this must be wanting to those who are not accustomed to read, for which reason, whatever is not striking must appear to them insipid or impertinent. I hope your Lordship found a letter from me at Edinburgh. Our friend Lady Frances Williams is not well in health, and her mind is still in a state of great dejection; my greatest hopes of her recovery are founded in her piety; wounds like hers religion only can cure. Mrs. Stanley is not worse than she was. If we do not go to London very soon, perhaps I shall take a trip to Clewar. My best compliments and wishes attend Mr. Lyttelton, I hope you will both return safe and well, that you may long make each other happy, is the most earnest wish, give me leave to say, prayer, of

Your Lordship's, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Miss Elizabeth Carter.

I CANNOT help telling my dear Miss Carter that I feel great concern at her affliction; but I shall not trouble her with the ordinary topics of consolation, for she is too well principled in virtue's book to want any lessons of patience, and is on all subjects and occasions qualified to teach, not wanting to learn. I know from what *you* do, one may learn what should be done. That divine wisdom will instruct and protect you, which you have preferred to human doctrines and the vain boasts of proud philosophy. Perhaps no shield but Christian fortitude could defend a heart so sensible and tender as yours; he who drew the sting out of death, and robbed the grave of its victory, has greatly mitigated the pangs of grief, and sorrows of separation, so that believers on him cannot sorrow as those that have no hope. An eternal day is still rising to their hopes, and restoring what darkness

and night have overcast; but he has given no example of that defiance of sorrow affected by men. When he drew near to the sepulchre of a disciple, he wept. Your grief, dear Madam, cannot be blamed. If it is possible you can forget any duty, it must be some duty to yourself, therefore excuse me if I urge to you a care of your health on this occasion; manage it as a public concern, and while you feel the sorrow of separation from a friend, consider how many in you would lose the best of friends and the best of guides. Your character will win or awe into virtue those with whom you form near connexions. God has blessed you with talents which will be useful to thousands; to ordinary persons in this world

"Their time 's a moment, and a point their space,"

but you are qualified to spread a lasting influence.

We have not had any thing from the press this winter that deserves your attention. If any such thing should come forth I will send it to you. There is a

French book that has made some noise, called L'Esprit; it is written by a French gentleman of fortune and rank; he is an author of wit; he tells a good story sometimes, and for le petit mot pour rire is admirable, but as a metaphysician, he is contemptible, as a moralist, execrable, and I believe you would think a whole quarto too much to read for the sake of a few sparkling sentences. I have only just begun the book; if you think it can amuse you I will send it; there is really a great deal of wit and spirit; he is always a fool or a wit, a character not uncommon any where, but especially in France; where if a man wears a jester's cap with a good grace, he immediately fancies a professor's gown would become him; and from making good puns he falls to making bad systems. Oh wits of France, will ye never know that ten thousand epigrams tacked together will not make a reasonable discourse and logical reasoning! But what signifies wit or sense in these times, when the humour is for all nations to blow out one anothers brains! As you

love Peace and all her smiling train, you will be sorry to hear the rage of war possesses this country at present to a high degree. My Lord Mayor after his custard, the alderman after his bottle of port, the common-council man after his bowl of rum punch, the justice of peace after double brewed October, all dream of equipments and expeditions. The speeches in Parliament have all been exhorting Mr. Pitt not to muzzle the dogs of war, and never to accept any peace on the terms of restoring Louisbourg. Alderman Beckford asserted that we had France under our feet; perhaps he took the idea from the champion of England bestriding the dragon at Charing-cross. Indeed, Mr. Alderman, if you can persuade France to lie still, we may trample on her at pleasure; but she will move an 100,000 legs and as many arms before she will suffer it. However, we are told, famine and all the miseries of poverty there will assist our arms. Sad auxiliaries! God send us, and those policy has taught us to call our enemies, a good and lasting

peace. If you punish my fault with a long silence, I dare not complain, if you let me hear from you soon, I shall most gratefully acknowledge the favour.

I am, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Lord Lyttelton.

Saturday Night, the 29th.

MY LORD.

THOUGH I find your Lordship and Mr. Lyttelton have been naturalized in Scotland, yet as you were born in England and have a pretty good establishment here, I will venture to congratulate you on your return to us; or, at least, I may congratulate myself and your other friends on the event. Whether I shall have the pleasure of seeing your Lordship before you go to Hagley I do not know, as our day for going to town is not fixed; but if business should keep you a very few days longer, I believe I may depend on

having that pleasure at your return from Mr. Payne's. I am impatient to hear your account of Scotland, and also your opinion of Mrs. Stanley's health. I hope the wild and sublime prospects of Scotland have not spoiled your taste for the gentler beauties of Hagley. Though the shade of a forest, breezes from a snow-topped mountain, and the dashing of a torrent, may be refreshing in a sultry day, or please a traveller by their novelty, yet softer scenes and milder air, cultivated lands and the vestiges of men, in rural or civil arts, must be more gladsome to the heart, than all savage nature can exhibit. Mr. Lyttelton is a charming painter; his views of Scotland appear as the scenes of Salvator Rosa would do, were they copied by Claude, whose sweet and lovely imagination would throw fine colours over the darkest parts, and give grace to the rudest objects. I design, at some time, to visit Scotland, but I do not expect more pleasure from nature's pencil than I have had from his pen. I can trust with equal confidence

and delight to all you say of him. Pray God preserve you to guide him, and preserve him to make you happy! I am not quite satisfied, nor quite displeased, with the account your Lordship gives of your health: as to mine, which you are so good as to enquire after, I am very well content with it: I can never expect a long course of uninterrupted health, but I am sure my constitution mends very much, and good spirits more than compensate for its delicacy. I am much flattered with your Lordship's approbation of the Cathedral at York. I think we may set King Alfred's character and York Cathedral in opposition to Athenian legislators and Athenian edifices, and our ancestors will not suffer much by the comparison; and it would be decided as party should run, for firm, and strong, or beautiful, and polished: as both are perfect in their kind, the contention must lie between the merit of the particular species of character, or architecture. I am afraid I should be a traitor, forget

Church and King, and vote for Pericles, and Athenian buildings.

I do not doubt but your Lordship will contrive to see Lady Frances Williams before you go to Mr. Payne's; by a letter I had from Mrs. Trevor last post, I find her Ladyship is very ill in health as well as spirits: your conversation may give her great consolation. Her mind is so weakened by this shock that it cannot assist itself in finding those religious consolations, which on any other occasion would offer themselves to her. To evils inflicted by human authority, resignation is sufficient obedience; but to the chastisements of the perfectly wise and good Being, we must not only patiently but cheerfully submit.

I beg that you will order Dr. Monsey to send me a direction to Mr. Lyttelton's boarding house at Eaton, for I cannot suffer his letters to lie unanswered, especially as he assures me I am still his flame, after all the northern ladies have done to get him from me. As your Lordship

says you shall not be in town till the meeting of the Parliament, I suppose you do not come to the birth day.

I am, yours, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

October the 23d, 1759.

MY LORD.

I AM afraid your Lordship will think I am very impertinent to break in upon your business at Hagley with a frivolous letter, but when I tell you I write at the request of a friend, I hope it will dispel any frown your brow may have contracted, or, at least, that I shall not be the object of your displeasure, who had not the least intention of writing to you to day. The friend I would intimate, is the person whom I told your Lordship I suspected to be the author of a letter lately published: you know the delicacies of their

situation, and will not wonder they should wish to consult the person in the world, of whose wisdom and fidelity they have the highest opinion. But the subject on which they would consult you, is of too much importance to them to be conveyed by the post, so that I was only to tell your Lordship that they were in want of your advice, and wished you would come to town as early in November as you could. I assured them you had business in the country that could not be neglected, I was answered *he was not made for the mean occupations of a country gentleman*, and then a long conversation was begun, in which the greatest respect and zeal for you was expressed, and much intimated of the high opinion others had of you. I wrote a letter to Lady Townshend to congratulate her on Mr. Townshend's success at Quebec, to which I had the most obliging answer imaginable. It was as affectionate as to a daughter, and as respectful as to an empress. She said her spirits had been so worn out she could not recover her dejection, and begged to see

me. On Sunday I found her very low-spirited still, though pleased with the late event. Mr. Charles Townshend was excessively gracious to me, and we talked of the affair of Quebec with the regards due to General Townshend. Mr. Wolfe was killed, and General Monckton wounded early in the action, so that certainly much of the glory of the day belongs justly to Mr. Townshend. But to shew how precarious the affections of the people are, it is not the fashion to give him any share of the honour; his letter is criticised as if he were a secretary and not a General: but most remarkable it is that in the City address, the whole glory is given to Mr. Wolfe, without the least mention of the other officers: what an opinion does this give one of the wisdom, justice, and generosity of the public! The encomiums on Mr. Wolfe run very high; a great action is performed, and envy can endure to give praise to a dead man: and there was certainly something very captivating in his character; he took the public opinion by a coup de

main, to which it surrenders more willingly than to a regular siege. The people had not time to be tired of hearing him called the brave; he is the subject of all people's praise, and I question whether all the Duke of Marlborough's conquests gained him greater honour. A long series of great actions and merit shewn through a long period of time, and on various occasions, must gain a lasting reputation, but in life as in writing, what is short but complete bears the character of sublime. Our friend Monsey is gone to Claremont. I hear our army in Germany is very sickly. I believe I made my last visit to Lady Medows this afternoon; after so long an illness she has a very painful exit; it was fortunate for me that she did not ask me to attend her, for though I am in as good health and spirits as possible, yet I found the object affect my nerves.

I am, my Lord, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

January 15th, 1760.

My Lord,

I am very glad to find that this frost, which might almost shiver the oaks of Hagley, does not affect its lord.

My eyes have at last served me to read the Collection of Letters, which have afforded me much entertainment: those from the illustrious I consider as written in their theatrical character, for though they are written behind the scenes, which gives them an air of reality, they are made to suit the assumed character. Lord B—— is patriot and philosopher after the manner of the ancients: his letters bear a consular and stoical dignity, and when I expect to see them signed Marcus Cato, or Caius Cassius, he surprizes me with a Christian name and modern title. Those of another eminent person appear more natural, though perhaps they are

not more sincere; but the modes we are used to, by their familiarity appear less constrained and artificial; and it is the philosopher only that knows words and phrases are arbitrary things. The vulgar will always confound reason and usage, call the usual natural and proper, the unusual the contrary; and I imagine a Roman senator would think the speeches of a British peer or senator, affected. However your Lordship will not wonder that I, who have had but little acquaintance with the worshipful company of the stoics, should call their language bombast. I must observe that it does honour to the person to whom these letters are addressed, that every correspondent speaks the language of virtue, though the tones are different, as every lover of a virtuous woman accosts her with modesty. So we will allow these writers to use the patois of Rome, or Paris, as education and study may decide; and I will go on to take notice of one letter, in which dignity, wisdom, and virtue appear, not merely in phrase and accent; they compose the

essence as well as direct the form of that fine epistle. Your Lordship must guess which I mean; though all the letters in the collection may not be important from their subject, or agreeable by their manner, I would not wish any of them destroyed. They will be of service to the person to whom they are wrote, perhaps, with their grandchildren; for one who when young was revered, consulted, and followed, by the eminent and old, cannot, sure, when old be slighted or disobeyed by the young!

I had the honour of your Lordship's letter on Friday the eleventh, so it was not delayed. Mrs. Boscawen has not had any illness; the Admiral is gone out in quest of glorious danger, which she bears with the courage of an Englishwoman.

I cannot approve your Lordship's visiting scheme in this cold season, you must make short journeys, for it is very unpleasant travelling. I will send Mr. Lyttelton the gazette extraordinary from Quebec, next post; it is from the Indian savages, and expressed in hieroglyphics;

it will give him an idea of the expresses sent by the Mexicans and Montezuma. I will send him the explanation with it. I like this manner of writing so well, that I hate Hermes Trismegistus, and all his alphabetical posterity for their useless invention of letters. I fancy that I, who in the present way of writing blunder round and round about a meaning, should have been a very complete orator in the hieroglyphical way. I assure your Lordship that my Indian chief gives the clearest account of a battle that ever I read, and if I was to study the art military, it must be in this manner. Mr. Stewart gave me this curious piece this morning, and I could not get it copied to night, but Mr. Lyttelton shall have it at Ebbrington.

Stewart was so amusing and so humble I could not scold him. He says he will soon finish the designs he promised me. His learning, ingenuity, sagacity, and application are surprizing. Monsey was with me this morning in tolerable spirits, but his daughter is still in a bad way.

Mrs. Pitt and your nephew were with me last night, she is much your Lordship's devoted. Lord and Lady Litchfield are in town. I did not say Lord Bath owned, but that he did not stoutly deny, the pamphlet. Mr. Pitt and his party are angry at it, and I hear Mr. Horace Walpole has answered it.

I am, my Lord, yours, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

I HAVE just received my dear Mrs. Carter's letter, and am very happy in her approbation of the Dialogues.* With her encouragement I do not know but at last I may become an author in form. It enlarges the sphere of action, and lengthens the short period of human life. To become universal and lasting is an ambition which none but great genius's should indulge; but to be read by a few, and for

* Mrs. Montagu wrote the three last Dialogues of the Dead, published by Lord Lyttelton.

a few years, may be aspired to. We see in nature, some birds are destined to range the vast regions of the air, others to fly and hop near the ground, and pick up the worms. I shall think myself happy if I can do any thing towards clearing society of their lowest and meanest follies. The Dialogues, I mean the three worst, have had a more favourable reception than I expected. Lord Lyttelton's have been admired to the highest degree, which indeed they deserve. I am sensible of the great disadvantage the others have in following them. Mrs. Modish is a great favourite with the town, but some ladies have tossed up their heads and said it was abominably satirical. You will hear from Lambeth how they are all approved of. The three last were for some days attributed to Mr. Charles Yorke, but alas! they are now mostly given to the true author. Lady F. Williams and the author's friends had little doubt. Mrs. Donnellan wrote a note insisting to be informed whether they were yours or——. I got myself pretty well out of the scrape,

and feeling they were unworthy of you, I took care to intimate they were not of your writing. My friendship resisted the temptation of giving you the blame. I believe without telling a direct fib I have puzzled Donnellan's curiosity. Few have had the indelicacy to ask, but several have hinted, and I have parried the blow. I have long been sorry to see the best of our sex running continually after public spectacles and diversions, to the ruin of their health and understandings, and neglect of all domestic duties; but I own the late instance of their going to hear Lord Ferrers's sentence particularly provoked me. The ladies crowded to the House of Lords to see a wretch brought loaded with crime and shame to the bar, to hear sentence of a cruel and ignominious death; which, considering only this world, cast shame back on his ancestors, and all his succeeding family. There was in this case every thing that could disgrace human nature and civil distinctions; but it was a sight, and in spite of all pretences to tenderness and

delicacy they went adorned with jewels, and laughing and gay, to see their fellow creature in the most horrid situation, making a sad end of this life, and in fearful expectation of the commencement of another. These ladies would be angry if one could suppose they would delight to see the blows and cuts boxers or back-sword champions give each other, yet honour, spirit, and courage, animate these combatants; nothing but a criminal insensibility, the most wicked hardness of heart could support Lord Ferrers under his crime and disgrace. Can one wonder that mistaken piety can make people spectators of the horrors of an auto da Fé, when the love of spectacles can carry women to see a murderer receive sentence! If I had been one of his judges I should have submitted to the pain of passing sentence; but if justice does not call one to a scene of punishment, what could induce one to be present at it? you will believe Mrs. Modish was there, though she does not mention it.

Lady Frances Williams and Mrs. Pitt

were here last night. I have passed this evening alone as quietly as if I had been in the country. The bad weather kept me in town. I ask pardon that I have not sent you the proposals for Thucydides, you shall have them in my next. Pray let me know the sentence of the Academy of Sciences at Deal on the Dialogues. Adieu, dear Madam, believe me most affectionately and tenderly, yours,

E. MONTAGU.

P. S. The Bishop of Elphin has carried his cause in our House of Peers, in which charity, equity, and Lady Frances Williams, triumph.

To Lord Lyttelton.

Sandleford, the 14th July.

MY LORD,

THOUGH I am not easily contented in so delicate a concern as a friend's health, I can with pleasure own myself entirely

satisfied with the accounts the Dean and Miss West have given me of your Lordship's. I went to Clewar last Friday, and returned to this place on Tuesday. It was not without regret I left Mrs. Stanley, for she received and entertained me with such cordial affection, it was not in the power of my humility or timidity to make me doubt whether I was welcome. Miss Stanleys were in Hampshire with their brother, but I passed my time very agreeably. Mrs. Stanley carried me on Saturday morning to see the castle, and in the evening to St. Leonard's Hill. Though the mistiness of the air obscured the prospect in some measure, there was enough to convince me it is one of the most charming places in England. The forest scenes, added to the views of a rich country, give the environs of Windsor a peculiar merit. The following evening we went to the Duke's, where I was still more delighted, as it is not only august and beautiful, but new and extraordinary. Since Moses struck the rock in the Desert, there surely has not been such a

water in a place of that kind! but how happened it, that an ambitious princely mind should enrich and adorn the sylvan scene, and curiously call forth every pastoral beauty, yet neglect the necessary grandeur in the building? This is certainly quite contrary to the bias of education and habit. Let us however applaud his disposition, if we blame his taste; for it seems as if his Royal Highness loved better the beauties of Nature than the pride of Art, and pomp of wealth. We were at Lord Harry Beauclerk's on Monday, and on Tuesday evening after six o'clock I set out for Sandleford, and I was a spectator of all the beauties of a Summer's night. For some time after sunset the hemisphere glowed with purple light, then faded to a silver grey, which was bright enough to shew to modest advantage the fine country I travelled through; but, by the time I had passed through Reading, there was an absence of light and objects, which prepared me well for the magnificent spectacle I was to be entertained with, when the night began

"to hang out her golden lamps." With great attention I watched the rising of every star till the whole heaven glowed with living sapphires; then I chose to consider them no longer separately as glowing gems, but lost myself in worlds beyond worlds, and system beyond system; till my mind rose to the great Maker of them all, who has not only given the stupendous laws by which all these vast bodies move, but with the same precision has appointed the modes and term of existence of the smallest animal that inhabits them; and to the least atom that composes these worlds has given its invariable properties. I should have trembled at the thought of my own littleness when my mind returned home from the contemplation of the universe, if I had not considered that the same hand that created it, feeds the ravens and upholds the sparrow, and has provided as infallibly for the preservation of the species of mites, as for the conservation of our solar system. I think I should ask your Lordship's pardon for troubling you with my

Midsummer night's dream; but I was delighted with my evening's journey, and I have not dared to say so, for the good folks I converse with, care not for any of the glittering host of heaven, but the harvest or hunter's moon. I am rejoiced to hear that your daughter will be in town in the winter under such protection as Lady Fortescue's. I am in hopes her Ladyship will permit me to have the pleasure of seeing Miss Lyttelton pretty often. Mrs. F—'s pique is unaccountable. I believe your Lordship is not mistaken in thinking me void of envy, but it is not by any real or fancied superiority I have been preserved from it; touching self-examination, I never compare myself with what I would, but with what I might be; and all people have so many faults uncorrected, and so many good qualities not improved to their possible perfection, that it is the fault of their indolence and pride they are not nearer to the excellence they envy. I had a charming letter last post from your son. If you let me have the pleasure of hearing

how you are amused in your journey, please to direct to me at Mrs. Scott's in Beaufort Square, Bath. I shall go thither next week. The Dean and I were a very happy couple, but as tranquil joys are apt to tire, he did not stay quite a week with me. The scene you live in, and your occupations are so heavenly, I wonder you do not sometimes fancy yourself the inhabitant of a better world, dispensing comforts to distressed mortals. As you are so happily placed and so worthily employed, you must pardon me for wishing your Lordship may long continue with us, and I beg you will be careful of your health.

I am, yours, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge Wells, Wednesday, 1760.

My Lord,

I got through my journey very well, à-la-mode of her Serene Highness la Princesse Mousseline la serieuse qui voyageoit pour lire. The day was gloomy, and the roads were rough, but the author I read had a gay and a smooth style, and thanks to it, I arrived without being weary; and after so much exercise felt less lassitude than in lolling in an easy chair in H ll-street. I find this place as vacant as possible, half a dozen Jews, and not twice the number of Christian people. I had a good deal of discourse with Mr. Stone after chapel, he is glad your Lordship is coming to Tunbridge. Poor Mrs. Stone, between illness and affliction, is a melancholy object. I remember that after my son was dead, I used to envy her fine boy, but not having a wicked disposition, did

earnestly wish she might not lose him. Poor woman! her felicity lasted longer than mine, and so her grief must be greater, but time is a sure comforter. ——— seems miserable here. What is beauty and what are graces where there are none to admire them? She wears the crook and shepherdess's habit, but royal robes and a sceptre would suit her disposition far better. A beauty and a keeper of a toy shop, are always unhappy in an empty season, at Tunbridge; people who have mere common sense and wooden wares to put off, always find those who will set a just price and value on their commodities. Your Lordship often laments your daughter is not a beauty and a genius, because you see beauties and wits when they smile and sparkle. But did you know the vexations of vanity, and the languors of pride in retirement, you would thank the gods for not having given her too many charms, and too many pretensions to admiration. I have known very few women in my life whom extra-

ordinary charms and accomplishments did not make unhappy. The air, mien, and conversation of my Lady ———— has brought this very strongly to my mind; however, I should rather have told your Lordship where you are to lodge, but I am not yet advanced beyond the preliminaries of the negotiation. I believe your Lordship must accept of a house on Mount Ephraim, which Lady Pembroke lived in last year, for I do not believe I can get you a better. Pray persuade my Lord Bath to make haste to Tunbridge; his brother the General is here, but I never could perceive even a family likeness between them, so I do not find the least consolation from that circumstance. I am already the better for fresh air, and do not doubt getting a good share of health here. Your company, Lord Bath's and Mrs. Carter's, will make me happy; that is a good prospect for some weeks to come; and I have learnt to live du jour la journeé, and neither to recal yesterday nor divine what shall be to morrow; so I have now a greater sum of pleasure by

me than I can count. Is not that great, considering the poverty of worldly happiness?

I am, my Lord, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge Wells, the 7th of August, 1760.

MY LORD.

IF I had not been very apprehensive that your Lordship was threatened with a severe fit of the rheumatism, I should not so placidly have received an account of your being still rheumatic; but one shade of evil lighter than our fears have painted seems a kind of blessing. I hope Dr. Monsey's medicine will entirely cure your complaint. I cannot yet boast of any great benefit from the Tunbridge waters, a bad lodging, a disagreeable system of life, and a great fright from the danger I was in of such an overturn in my coach

as would probably have been fatal, has kept me much in the same state I was in when I came hither. I have rested better lately. I do not, with your Lordship, accuse the vivacity of my imagination of this insomnie, for I remember, that when my mind was more lively, more diligent, incessantly forming landscapes or history pieces, real portraits or grotesque forms, it used to sleep eight or ten hours without even the visitation of a dream, and rose in the morning like Aurora, throwing freshness and joy on every object, tricked itself out in sunbeams, and set in gay and glowing colours. If any person had then advertised for a companion to travel through the deserts of Siberia or Africa, I would have recommended my imagination to them, as one which would shew ities where even a cottage did not appear, or, like Moses's wand, would bring a river from a rock. It was from this picture-drawing faculty, I used to be always amused and gay; and when first fancy began to lose some of its creative powers, it retained the complaisance of

Hamlet's courtier, and could trace a weasel or an elephant in a shapeless cloud, from the least hint that was given it. But from a painter this poor mind is sunk into a mere journal writer: and barely repeats matter of fact and the event of the day, and yet it cannot sleep over the dull story in black and white, as it did on the gay, illuminated, fairy tale.

I do not wonder that Lady Lincoln's acquaintance should be shocked at her death; it is only while one looks at Holbein's picture, that one couples this king of terrors with such gay and youthful characters. I think Death seems of late to be grown an epicure, and to feed on pea-fowl and singing birds; so that we ordinary domestic things may hope to be neglected by him. I hear he yet spares the phœnix Coventry, and that she is relieved by the breaking of an impost-hume.

I have lived so entirely alone that it has not been possible for me to spare my poor eyes; I have made them read many hours every day. I got from the book-

sellers here a volume of the new translation of Sophocles, which I read with great pleasure, or, if it be a greater compliment to Melpomene, I may almost as properly say with great pain; and indeed with an interest and eagerness that is not to be described, and which was probably in part owing to the veneration to a great name. The Œdipus Coloneus affected me extremely, and would have done so more, if it had not been for the constant presence of the chorus; but the passions are awed and checked by a crowd. I am more than ever averse to the chorus, because that the translator tells us, the chorusses of Sophocles are less alien to the subject of the drama than those of any other tragedian; yet here they hurt the interest of it very much. I should ot be so much moved by the tender paternal chiding of Henry the Fourth, if his majesty's privy counsellors were all on the stage, interrupting his expostulations with his son by a fine song on paternal care, and the mischiefs of youthful indiscretion. But after all, I envy the

Athenians an entertainment so noble in itself, so affecting to their state, so glorious to their country, and so honourable to their founder Theseus. With respect to Sophocles be it spoken, I wish the play had ended with the tragical and mystical death of Œdipus. The supernatural circumstances that attend it would have left the mind in a state more truly tragic than it is in at the conclusion of his daughter's lamentations; which though fine and pathetic, are such as might follow on the death of any other father. The thunder that comes in as symphony to the last act of fated Œdipus, his death so supernatural, his body the pledge of empire, and the place of his burial unknown to all but Theseus and his successors, are circumstances that leave the mind in a very peculiar situation, and I think I would defy the tragic Muse to do anything greater. I have not seen my opinion authorized by any critic or commentator, but I shall know whether it is right or not, when your Lordship tells me yours.

I am very happy in being so much in

your son's favour; I shall not forfeit my interest by negligence. I shall hope to hear sometimes how the Sunning waters agree with your Lordship.

I am, my Lord, yours, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

P.S. How is Lord Egremont? I hope well enough to visit Hagley.

From Lord Lyttelton

To Mrs. Montagu.

Hagley Park, August 23d, 1760.

THE last post brought me a letter from the Madonna, which made me very happy, by assuring me that her health improved every day, and that she was grown fat, a very good sign of her being well: but yet my satisfaction will not be quite perfect till she has perfect good sleep, and I hope her next letter will bring me that news.

I am not surprized at Lord Bath's palpitations; but do not let him judge by

them of his health. Your parties of pleasure with Miss Stanley I much approve. Nothing is better for you than idle diversion. I am as busy here with my workmen, as I was when chancellor of the exchequer, with statesmen, and as much plagued with fools and knaves. Tom said to me yesterday, "Papa you feel now *l'embarras des richesses*," and so I do. Among other disappointments, my chairs and tables for my drawing room are not yet sent, though they were promised a month ago, and having no account of them, I very much fear that I shall be forced to open my house with one of my principal rooms quite unfurnished. Think, Madam, what a vexation and disgrace this must be! but it shall not break my rest, if in your next letter you say you sleep well. I can always be a philosopher if you are not sick. Nevertheless, my philosophy and you must allow me to swear a little at these things. I think you could not deny it me if you were a methodist. C'est un soulagement nécessaire.

If you should publish your criticism

upon my History, you would lose all the fame you would gain by the publication of those you have favoured me with upon Sophocles, for which I give you a thousand thanks. I thank you too for what you say of my History, for I am proud that your judgment can be so blinded by your friendship to me. Indeed I have always observed that true friendship is little more clear-sighted than love, though pretended friendship is as sharp in discerning defects, *quam aut aquila aut serpens Epidaurius,* as Horace has said with great truth. Take care, Madonna, that you do not lose this letter, for this quotation will discover the secret of your understanding Latin. But you may as well own that secret; for your criticisms upon Sophocles will soon lay you under the worse imputation of understanding Greek. It will be in vain for you to plead the English Translation; for nobody will believe that without being a mistress of the original language, you could so perfectly judge of that author. I admire all you say upon the

Œdipus Tyrannus;* but I will own to you, though I think the intrigue of that play is the best unfolded of any I ever read, the conclusion of it shocks me. To suppose that heaven would inflict all the severity of its vengeance upon a man quite unconscious of the guilt of his actions, and therefore quite innocent, nay more, deserving all the favour of heaven for the purity and the virtue of his intentions, appears to me the most horrid impiety. But this, I own, is the fault of the theology of the times, and not of the poet. Your observations upon the Antigoné charm me. I can add nothing to them, but that delicacy of sentiment in the passion of love seems to have been little known to any Greek writers, whom I have read. And I think all the passions are better described by them than that, of which one should imagine that a people so polite, and endued with so much sensibility in other respects, must have had the most fine and exquisite feelings. What to ascribe this to I cannot tell.

* The Letter alluded to is mislaid.

Just before I left Clewar, I was much entertained with a new French tragedy, writ by a friend of Helvetius, and dedicated to him. It is an interesting, spirited, and well conducted drama: but in order to raise our idea of Spartacus, whose name it bears, the author has departed from historical truth, with regard to his birth, a liberty which I think cannot be allowed where the facts are so well and generally known. You will be pleased with the sentiments he has put into the mouth of that captain of gladiators, whom he has made a hero fighting for the liberty of mankind, and with those of his mistress, who loves like a Roman, and yet like a woman. Upon the whole, it seems to me, that this tragedy would be little inferior to some of the best of Voltaire's, if the writer of it possest the art of versification in the same degree of excellence as that great poet; but in this he is too deficient. I rejoice to hear that your eyes are grown strong again; but remember that they are to be used with some caution, like a limb newly set. I

will allow you to kill with them as much as you please, (for *that* they can do without any effort) but not to read as much as you please, no, nor even to write.

My health continues very good. I believe I shall soon grow so young again, that there will be some danger of love coming upon me, instead of the rheumatism, like a thief in the night, and that is a thief from which I cannot be delivered by Monsey's powders.

Adieu, sweet Madonna; your boy and the governor are both perfectly well, and so is also your friend Mrs. Hood, allowing for the absence of her dear, which takes from her the relish of health. Why are dears ever absent? It is a wrong thing in the course of this world, and will be set right in paradise.

I am, &c. &c.

LYTTELTON.

To Lord Lyttelton.

The 27th of August.

My Lord,

If the delays of the workmen occasion your Lordship some embarrassments, they deliver you from others, I should have answered your letter of the 18th if I had not waited for some information from Mr. Griffith concerning the girandoles, but not hearing from him, I had just begun a letter to your Lordship, when I was most agreeably interrupted by yours of the 23d. I am so far from wondering that your Lordship is vexed that the chairs and tables for your drawing room are not ready, that I shall think you *outrez* the stoical philosophy if you do not break Mr. Lovell's head. With all the tenderness of my sex, so sensible to vanity and friendship, I enter into your mortification, and as I cannot alleviate my vexation by swearing, I think I will beg of you to get the governor to scalp Mr. Lovell, and

send me the spoils of his idle head. But if this drawing room should not be complete, yet great will be the splendour of the day; and I shall envy every guest but Mrs. H——, to whom music will be discord, mirth impertinence, and pomp but a weary show; depend upon it she had rather meet Mr. H—— in the worst inn's worst room, and dine with him on eggs and bacon, than sit in your Lordship's saloon at an epicurean feast.

I have observed your Lordship's directions to be idle, au pied de la lettre. I carried Miss Stanley and a large party to Coombank, on Saturday. Miss Stanley left me yesterday morning, and instead of going to the ball at night, having after long waiting obtained the first volume of Sophocles, I sat down to read the Philoctetes and the Ajax. I agree with your Lordship entirely, that the misfortunes of Œdipus are the disgrace of the heathen theology; but I do not wonder that those who did not expect a future state, where all things should be set right, imagined there was a fate that over-ruled the justice

of the gods. I should have imagined Sophocles had been a priest at Delphos, and that he had a mind to keep up the reverence to oracles and prophecies, and to support them by a belief of predestination; for most of his plays mention some oracle; and Œdipus and Creon are treated as impious for their contempt of Tiresias, and it is insinuated that they are punished for it. I will observe to your Lordship, that though a man appears innocent who has ignorantly broken a moral law, or civil institution, yet we fancy a law of nature, such as a man's not marrying his mother, should be guarded by instinct; and the mind can hardly reconcile itself to the disaster; and the offspring of such a marriage shock one as a kind of monsters. However, Œdipus's punishment of himself is treated as an act of passion, by the Chorus, and also by Creon, who upbraids him with it in the Œdipus Colonæus. It is surprising that as Sophocles wrote that play under the affliction of his sons' disobedience, he should not make Œdipus utter one sentiment that bears

the mark of paternal affection wounded, but he merely resents duty neglected. " Il ne s'attendrit point sur lui-même," as King Lear frequently does. Œdipus complains more like an offended magistrate than an injured father. King Lear has a *foiblesse* of character which makes the tender complaints more suitable than they would be to Œdipus; but they would still arise in the breast of every parent, and Shakspeare himself makes Hamlet say, that, if the player were in his situation, and had his cause for passion, how would he complain, who could lament so for Hecuba! yet Shakspeare feels more for Lear than Sophocles did for himself. One cannot judge at this distance, whether the opinions of the age, the temper of the man, or the nature of his talents, governed in these things. My translator has not given us any notes of consequence; I think the best is on the Philoctetes, where he gives a preference to Thomson in some passages relating to the deserted bard; there is both candour and taste in the criticism. I believe that for the fu-

ture I shall weep when Greek is imputed to me, that I am innocent of the charge, for I grieve, every line I read of this noble tragedian, that I cannot have him in his native spirit; and I lament it the more, because I know all translators modernize the phrase, and bring the dialogue as near as possible to our manners: indeed phrase is a part of manners, and no trivial one. I have great suspicion that Hæmon's expostulations with his father are softened by Mr. Franklyn. I should certainly taste these plays much more if I was a good Grecian, but how much more if I had been an old Greek. How must a Theban be affected with the representation of Œdipus Tyrannus! And with what veneration must an Athenian, just come perhaps from sacrificing in the Temple of Theseus, behold him on the stage. They would naturally shrink too with horror, on thinking they might heedlessly have trod on the very ground where Œdipus died in the supernatural manner related, the circumstances of which

had so much of sacred horror, as to daunt the mighty soul of Theseus; who though invited to behold Œdipus's death, yet finding the divinity so immediate an actor in it, veils his eyes, and falls into prayer with pious reverence. Descriptions of places familiar to us, and the catastrophe of our countrymen, must affect us more than scenes and persons unknown: and I do not doubt but Shakspeare has derived many advantages from bringing our Henrys and our Richards on the stage. What would Cranmer's prophecy lose related to a Russian, though he understood English! I cannot approve of my admired Sophocles, in his choice of the death of Hercules for a play. Poor Hercules appears merely the son of Alcmena through the whole piece. His servant brings a lie and a mistress from him to his wife; you are informed he had been spinning with Omphale, and had afterwards destroyed the parents and country of Iole, to possess himself of the fair; after the fatal present his complain-

ings are weak and womanish. In the slave of pleasure and of pain who can find the deified Hercules? He seems as faithless to virtue, which he had chosen in his youth, as to Dejanira. My letter is already so much too long, I will not tire your Lordship at present with my opinion of Philoctetes.

There is certain news to day of the Duke's being struck with the dead palsy; there will be more sorrow for the King, and more crape for his liege subjects; for both which I grieve. I am afraid your Lordship will think I scrawl worse and worse, but my morning has been pretty well consumed. I have been at Chapel, at a philosophical lecture, and to hear a gentleman play on the viol d'amore, and in deep discourse with a Jew and a Quaker. I hope your Lordship's health will not suffer from the fatigue of your entertainment; I am perfectly well, and sleep like a dormouse, and my eyes are so good that I can almost read my own writing. Miss S. Stanley is to come here to morrow. Ten thousand thanks for your most

charming letters, and believe me with the greatest gratitude, and most perfect regard,

My Lord, &c.

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Sunday, September the 7th.

My Lord.

I flatter myself that Hagley has been the scene of mirth and gaiety, and that health and cheerfulness came not as guests but inhabitants into the new house; but I begin to wish the post on Tuesday may assure me I have not entertained an idle, though a pleasing dream. Mr. Lyttelton did not mention any thing concerning your Lordship's state of health, your letter of the 23d of August said you were well, but it is long to give you credit on such a subject so delicate and important till the 9th of September. I am perfectly well, and with great gratitude

to these salutary springs, shall take leave of Tunbridge to morrow se'nnight, the 15th of September. I shall take but two days rest in London, and propose to set out on Thursday the 18th. I hope my friends will let me hear from them on Monday the 15th, or Wednesday the 18th, that I may set out with spirit. Care is too heavy a thing for the rapid conveyance of a post-chaise. I would set out with my mind free and lively, and then good weather and fine prospects will carry me cheerfully to my melancholy abode at Newcastle; as epicureans sung and feasted, and crowned themselves with the roses of the spring, though they thought they were travelling towards the house of darkness. The great Monsey came hither on Friday, and stays till Thursday; he is an excellent piece of Tunbridge ware. He is great in the coffee-house, great in the rooms, and great on the pantiles. Bucks, divines, misses, and virtuosi, are all equally agreeable to him. Miss Sally Stanley leaves me on Friday. There is no abatement of

Lord Bath's passion: and I have had two sides of folio paper from the Bishop of London* so affectionate, so polite, so badine, it would surprise you. I answered his Lordship's first letter concerning the Highland poems, and with great deference urged the reasons which induced me to esteem them genuine. His Lordship pays great compliment to what I had said on the subject, answers other parts of my letter with spirit and gaiety, and at last concludes, that in spite of 83, without a voice, and with shaking hands, he had endeavoured to follow my train of thought, which he should always look upon as a very good direction; but adds his time of life called for other subjects, even the greatest, to justify the ways of God to men: and I think the paragraph implies that he is employed in writing on religious subjects. I am called to dinner, so I will lengthen my letter by enclosing a very curious one from Montesquieu to Warburton. I shall be rejoiced to hear that the rheumatism has not been at the

* Sherlock.

opening of the new house. Did the girandoles arrive?

I am, my Lord, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Newcastle, Friday the 10th of September, 1760.

MY LORD,

I MUST condole with your Lordship on the departure of Mr. Rust; by your description of him, I suspect some Muse assumed a human shape, on purpose to reside incognito at Hagley, in a season of jollity and la bonne chere, when the spiritual nine were not invited, nor expected. By the voice, figure, and universality of talents, it is probable it was Apollo himself. But pray tell me, who is this soy disant Mr. Rust? is he a gentleman of fortune who takes his pleasure in the gardens of Parnassus? or does he toil in the appropriated fields of science

as a professor? I imagine, by his not being more celebrated, he must be very young. I rejoice that your Lordship has had a companion so worthy to converse with you, for I often pity your painful pre-eminence of talents and knowledge, which makes it difficult for my Lord Lyttelton to meet with any one capable of bearing a part in the kind of conversation he would naturally choose. I shall be very glad to see Mr. Rust's translations of Euripides and Sophocles. I imagine Mr. Franklyn's translation to be like the mask taken off a fine face in plaister of Paris; in which the features of the original are exactly marked, and the air of countenance preserved, but many a delicate touch and spirited grace is wanting. Such a mask, indeed, is far preferable to a bad picture. Most translators who profess to imitate, do in fact only mimic their original; they catch some peculiarity and heighten it to caricatura. When I know that no poet can write in the true spirit of Dryden, Cowley, or Shakspeare, though they have the use of the same language, I am

a little incredulous as to their being able to hit that je ne sçai quoi, so delicate, so unreducible to any rule of art, in a language of a quite different turn and spirit. Suppose I were told, there was not a single statuary, who could in marble entirely imitate a modern statue of Mr. Rysbrach's, but that an hundred artists would readily undertake to make an exact likeness of some ancient statue in gold or Parian marble, could I hope with great confidence for the performance of this promise? I own I was glad Mr. Franklyn undertook to imitate Sophocles only in an elegant and chaste simplicity. The most flexible mind or body can hardly mould itself into the exact form of another, and every attempt towards it will have an air of distortion and constraint: I think those writings alone, which I could have known at sight to be translations, have been such as have professed to be rather imitations than translations, and to follow closer the spirit, than the letter of the orginal. What these gentlemen commonly call the spirit of their author, is really nothing

but the idiom of his tongue; whereas if they would but consider that the best way to imitate, is to write those thoughts and sentiments in pure, elegant, and natural English, which their author wrote in pure, elegant, and natural Greek or Latin, the ignorant reader would be much obliged to them. I do not wonder that a person of Mr. Rust's taste and learning, should have a superior admiration of the Greek tragedies. I have not seen any thing of the dramatic kind in any language, which, take it for all in all, seems to me at all equal to Sophocles's plays, even through the dull medium of translation. As the perfection of writing consists not so much in shining passages, as in the total perfection of a work, the best and surest applause is the unwearied attention of the reader. False thoughts and grotesque ornaments may please and surprise, but it is only the just, the natural, and the proper, that can engage. The mob, indeed, are attracted by the exhibition of monsters, prodigies, and foreign rarities; but the judicious spectator is to be fixed by the regular, beau-

tiful, and orderly productions. Your Lordship's favourite tragedy of Philoctetes, though it is very barren of events, proves itself the master-piece of art, by the constant attention it commands. I think if all I possess was at the hazard of a trial at law, I should not listen to the pleaders with greater attention and interest than I did to Neoptolemus, Ulysses, and Philoctetes, litigating for the arrows. One wonders how it will end. The honest, generous, and frank character of Neoptolemus, makes one under little apprehension he should use force or fraud, to a miserable man who has trusted him. Ulysses has all his wonted subtilty and art; but what is cunning when understood? treachery, ill usage, severe suffering, despair, and solitude, have rendered Philoctetes suspicious, resentful, and inflexible; his mind, like his cave, is rude, forlorn, and almost inaccessible: he will not listen to human councils or persuasion. A deity is wanted to untie the knot, but Philoctetes, abandoned by all the Gods, will obey none of them; despair is

impious. What can be done then? why! let his hero, his benefactor, his deified friend appear; he comes, unties the knot without breaking any of the strong threads of which it was composed. That the difficulty and distress arose merely from the personal characters of those concerned, without any external impediment, and are removed without violating those characters, is most singularly beautiful. The tragedy of Ajax seems to me, to fall far short of the other. Ulysses is not there directed by Minerva, but Minerva seems to act by the counsels of Ulysses, and divine wisdom is turned into human cunning. The minute description of Ajax killing and quartering sheep, is abominable, the story would pass in light narration, as in Homer, but dwelt upon, circumstantiated, and as it were represented, it deviates into the comic. The behaviour of the Atridæ is barbarous and brutal; they act like tyrants over their savage subjects, not like chiefs of an army of heroes. Though I admire Athenian art, I have not lost my esteem for the native

genius of Shakspeare; he alone, like the dervise in the Arabian tales, can throw his soul into the body of another man, feel all his sentiments, perform his functions, and fill his place. Must not one have been in King Lear's situation, who had injured one daughter, and been offended by another, feared the world's censure for imprudent generosity, and dreaded losing all the tender pleasures of paternal love, before one could have thought of falling on one's knees to one's child, to beseech her to be dutiful. How, without having incurred the guilt of murder, did Shakspeare so far feel the remorse that attends it, as to know that after having done such an act, when the grooms cry God bless us, Macbeth could not say Amen; and that his crime being so recent, that he was scarce acquainted with the nature and measure of his offence, he should make him ask himself, "wherefore could I not say Amen?" Every passing sentiment is caught by this great genius; every shade of passion, every gradation of thought is marked. In the famous soliloquy, "To be

or not to be?" how naturally do all the questions arise! and how finely are those circumstances set forth which are most grievous to the discontented mind. The insolence of office, the rich man's contumely, the law's delay, the thousand scorns that patient merit from the unworthy takes, these are the grievances a splenetic mind complains of; it is not the anguish or the fear of bodily diseases that prompts the desperate hand of self-murder, it is gloomy pride and discontent at the offences offered by fellow creatures that drives the soul to sullen desperation. When Macbeth intimates to his wife that he is about something with which he will not acquaint her, you see his words are full of the dark and bloody purpose of a midnight murder, and he considers the night only as an accomplice. How finely does King John prepare us for the command he is going to give to Hubert? My paper would not hold all the remarks one might make on King Lear's addresses to the storm, and his return of thought to his daughters, and the workings of a wounded

mind, till by degrees madness is brought on. In his Hamlet, King John, Henry the Fourth, and in all his good plays, he makes his person say what one would imagine could not occur to any one who was not in their very circumstances. I imagine that being an actor might a little assist him in this respect; the writer puts down what he imagines, the actor what he feels, the characters and situations are in some degree realised in the acting. Had Shakspeare lived in Sophocles' age and country, what a writer had he been! what powers had he by nature, and alas! what deficiencies in art! genius alone cannot attain the perfection of composition, but it can "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art." I must observe too, that the moral reflections of Shakspeare are not the cold and formal observations of a spectator; but come warm from the heart of the interested person. How natural are those made by Wolsey on his disgrace! the same things out of the mouth of the Chorus, would lose much of their force and their grace, and wear too great an appearance

of common-place observations. But I ask pardon for troubling your Lordship with what, if it is just, you must have observed before, if it is not, is unworthy of your attention. I am actually an inhabitant of Newcastle, and am taking out my freedom, not out of a gold box, but by entering into all the diversions of the place. I was at a musical entertainment yesterday morning, at a concert last night, at a musical entertainment this morning. I have bespoken a play for to-morrow night, and shall go to a ball on choosing a mayor on Monday night. The people are very obliging and desirous to amuse me, and I could never understand master Shallow's dignity of being very proud and very melancholy, and so I endeavour to seem diverted at least. As I am in good health, I could spend my time very happily with my books. More leisure and fewer acres had possibly made me happier, but my business is to make the best of things as they are. I am not much alarmed at the report of Emin, it may be an old lie or a new one. The Bishop of Ossory and Dr.

Gregory left us on Monday. My compliments attend all my friends at Hagley. Your Lordship will be glad to hear we are to have more Highland poetry.

I am, my Lord, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

P. S. The post which is just come in has brought me a letter from Mrs. Pitt, in which she tells me there is news that Mr. Emin is alive and well.

To the Same.

Newcastle, Oct. 3, 1760.

MY LORD,

A LETTER I had the honour to write your Lordship on the road would tell you how well I endured my journey, and I can now add, that a week's residence in the busy smoky town of Newcastle has not impaired the stock of health and spirits I acquired at Tunbridge. My mind, indeed,

is no longer sporting in the fairy land of fancy, taking flights on Ruggiero's Hippogryph, or making excursions to the moon, with the gallant and the gay Astolpho. I lament the loss your Lordship has of Mr. Meadowcourt; an ingenious mind that is weaned from the cares and business of the world, void of envy, void of avarice and ambition, makes a sweet companion and a faithful friend. I imagine Lindridge, like its master, had a character of elegant simplicity, and that the whole brought to one's mind the golden age, so called because there was then no gold. The pleasure one receives from persons and places, where art has done no more than remove what in uncultivated nature is too rude, is very great. But Hagley and Hagley's master, where, with every improvement and addition, nothing has been vitiated and spoilt, must afford its guests much higher satisfaction. I will confess, that I wished very much to have snatched your Lordship for an hour from Hagley, where every rill has its course directed in the

line of beauty, to the banks of a rude, rough, roaring, boisterous river at Weatherby; and if I had had quel Ippogrifo grande, e strano augello of my friend Ruggiero's at command, you would have found yourself instantly wafted to the shore of the river Wharff, where I should have attended to conduct you up a sweet valley in which this river runs between rocky banks, whose rugged fronts are adorned with oaks, beeches, and ash. Trim art has never checked their luxuriance; some bend their branches quite over the river, others grow aslant; some seem entirely to prefer the spray of the river to the dew of the heavens, and from the top of the bank hang perpendicularly down. The stream is as clear as the finest crystal, and where it runs on the pebbles, dimples and whispers, but when it meets with rocks, it foams and roars, and dashes and froths, with wonderful impetuosity; like the human mind, which in the smooth and even scene of life, is gentle in its looks and its tones, but meeting great impediments in its course, frets, storms,

and threatens, and we ask ourselves whether it is of the same element which just before appeared so soft and inviting. My landlord, I found, was a man of taste, and much delighted with my admiration of the river, and he said with an air of disdain, that none of the quality (except my Ladyship and the Bishop of Durham) had even perceived its beauty. I observed in my walk a small neat house with Venetian windows, advantageously placed to command all the objects on the river; and asking my landlord to whom it belonged, he told me he was building it for his own use; to which I answered, it would be very agreeable to his guests to dine there. He said, indeed, he had built it with an intention to inhabit it whenever he could quit *public life*. I was diverted to find the phrase and sentiment of a weary innkeeper answer so exactly to that of a harassed minister of state. But, alas! they are both deceived in their schemes of repose. The murmuring of a river may amuse a man who has been used only to the softer purling of a rill, but to him

who has been accustomed to the racket of business, or the roaring of a torrent, it would soon appear very dull.

I grieved for my friends at Hagley when the weather changed. I met with reports of "your great living and high renown" in London, and I rejoice much that your elegant and polite hospitality has been so well understood by those it has entertained. Dr. Gregory came hither last night; he assures me, your Lordship had won the hearts of all Scotland in your tour, and gained all their admiration by your Dialogues.

I assure your Lordship, you do me but justice in supposing I prefer wisdom to wit, especially in old people. In young persons one fancies wit will ripen into wisdom, and one loves the blossoms of the spring as the hopes of the fruit of autumn; but in that season, unless the understanding, like the orange tree, bears fruit at the same time as blossoms, it falls in our esteem. I revere my old prelate as a higher being. There is a character I respect above all others, where wit and

wisdom are equally joined, where there is equal greatness, strength, solidity, and elegance of mind; spirit and activity in business, and yet a delicacy of honour that avoids that which can sully the person who is employed in it. Where these perfections meet, may they be crowned with fortune's fairest garlands!

The post has just brought me a letter from Mrs. Pitt. She is now in my house in Hill-street, which I recommended as the best ready furnished lodgings she could find at present. The Bishop of Ossory is just arrived at Newcastle, and I expect him every moment.

I am, my Lord, yours, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

October the 21st.

My Lord,

Your Lordship's letter of the 11th gave me many pleasures, of which it was not the least to find you speak with such sensibility of the charms of your elegant habitation. The beauties of a palace are not so enchanting as those of a garden or park, but they differ only as eloquence and poetry do, and who that has fine taste does not relish both? one enjoys with a spirit of enthusiasm a fine park; imagination assists, fiction embellishes, and our pleasure is of the poetic kind. The charms of a fine edifice are more real, more sober, more regular; they always please, but seldom transport: in the winter of life and of the year, they are preferable; and the seasons of both allow more days in which we want comfort, than in which we can take pleasure. I will not be so rigorous as to condemn even the vanity of a fine house, for to a wise man at least,

not a vanity is given in vain; your Lordship makes the right use of it to gain the affections of those whom you entertain. Long may you adorn, and long may you enjoy this fine place; but alas, much longer will you be the glory of Hagley than the possessor! Future ages will enquire under what oak you planned your History or wrote your Monody? but pardon your cotemporaries if they do not look forward with pleasure to your posthumous fame. I do not know whether my landlord at Weatherby might not prefer his valley to Hagley, for vacant minds love a spectacle that fills them, but a philosopher would prefer the more gentle scene, which assists his contemplation, and does not press to be the object of it. The raree-shows of nature are rather to be viewed sometimes, than to be constantly desired; be assured therefore, my Lord, that I am ready to step into the chariot of Armida, whenever you send it, though it should find me on the banks of the Wharff, for I should willingly change its wild untamed beauties for the

Culte pianure e delicati colli,
Chiare acque, ombrose rive, e prati molli

of Hagley.

Dr. Monsey sent me your Lordship's admirable letter; the poor Doctor's health and spirits are now very uncertain; I have not heard from him for several posts, so I fear he is in low spirits, for when his heart is light, his thoughts take wing to me.

Your Lordship's account of Miss Lyttelton rejoiced me on your account and hers. I congratulate you that your son is fit to grace public life, your daughter to bless domestic. Your Lordship's forming care will polish her virtues, till they are smooth and soft, and never idly wish to make them bright and dazzling. Extraordinary talents may make a woman admired, but they will never make her happy. Talents put a man above the world, and in a condition to be feared and worshipped; a woman that possesses them must be always courting the world, and asking pardon, as it were, for uncommon excellence. I am afraid I shall not get to London before the 15th of November, though I shiver

now at our northern breezes. This town is at present very gay from the races. I am glad Mr. des Champs's translation will soon appear. Mrs. Pitt would leave my house, I believe, yesterday. I am very glad it was serviceable to her; she seems to love me with great sincerity. I hear Lord Bath says such fine things of me, as will make Monsey quite jealous.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

From Lord Lyttelton

To Mrs. Montagu.

Hagley Park, October 26th, 1760.

MADONNA,

THE sudden death of the King will make me leave this place to-morrow, a week sooner than I had intended, and I propose to be in town on Tuesday or Wednesday. This is only to notify it to you, for I have not a moment to spare. I suppose all things will go on as they did for some

time in the court and the nation. Certainly it is no season for any great changes. As to my own situation, I doubt not it will be as it is. The Dean received an admirable letter from you last post. I have read it over and over with infinite pleasure. Come well to London, and let the world go as it will. Adieu; you shall hear from me again as soon as I have seen my friends in town, and can tell you any news. I am perfectly well, and ever, Madam,

Your most faithful,

and obedient humble servant,

LYTTELTON.

My respectful compliments to Mr. Montagu.

Monday Morning. I have just received your letter of the 21st, but am in too great a hurry to write more at present. God preserve you, and send you well to town. I am sorry you don't come before the 15th. I feel real grief for the loss of my good master: but I hope he is gone

to receive an eternal crown, for the honesty of his heart, his love of justice and mercy, and regard to the rights of the people he governed. These are capital virtues in a king, and will cover a multitude of faults.

To Lord Lyttelton.

Newcastle, October 31st, 1760.

My Lord,

It would be perfect sacrilege and robbing the mighty dead of his due rites, if one began one's letter with any subject but the loss of our sovereign; on which I condole with your Lordship, in whom the virtue of patriotism, and the antiquated one of loyalty still remain. I know you had that veneration for our late king, which the justice and prudence of his government so well deserved. With him our laws and liberties were safe; he possessed in a great degree the confidence of his people and the respect of foreign

governments; and a certain steadiness of character made him of great consequence in these unsettled times. During his long reign we never were subject to the insolence and rapaciousness of favourites, a grievance of all others most intolerable, when persons born only one's equals, shall, by the basest means perhaps, possess themselves of all the strength of sovereign power, and keep their fellow subjects in a dependance on illegal authority, which insults while it subjects, and is more grievous to the spirits than even to the fortunes of freeborn men. If we consider only the evils we have avoided during his late majesty's reign, we shall find abundant matter of gratitude towards him, and respect for his memory. His character would not afford subject for epic poetry, but will look well in the sober page of history. Conscious, perhaps, of this, he was too little regardful of sciences and the fine arts; he considered common sense as his best panegyrist. The monarch whose qualities are brilliant enough to entitle him to glory,

cultivates the love of the Muses, and their handmaid arts, painting, sculpture, &c. sensible that they will blazon and adorn his fame. I hope our young monarch will copy his predecessor's solid virtues, and if he endeavours to make them more brilliant by the help of poetry, eloquence, &c. &c. the happiness and glory of Britain will be great. His present majesty's religious disposition, and decent moral conduct, give us hopes we shall not be plunged into riot, and lost in debauchery and libertinism, which, if it were to take place at court, would soon affect a rich and luxurious nation, and the profaneness and immorality of Charles the second's days, would, from the more prosperous state of the nation at present, be much outdone. But, thank God, there is no room to fear this, and your Lordship will believe, that to a woman, good morals are the first consideration. I do not pretend to judge when peace is more eligible than war, but I know that at all times, and in all situations, virtue is preferable to vice, and piety to impiety, and

under a religious king we may hope for the assistance and protection of God, without which human policy builds only on a sandy foundation; so that with the wisest council, the bravest army, and the most powerful fleet, I should not hope for any lasting prosperity, if the laws and majesty of the King of kings were to be daily offended and affronted.

I will now thank your Lordship for your letter and the Highland compositions. Your remarks go far in staggering my faith as to their authenticity. I think they convince me the poems cannot be as ancient as pretended. It seems to me possible, that some great bard might from uncertain and broken tradition, and the scattered songs of former bards, form an epic poem, which might not agree with history. The pillars in the hall of Fingal struck me at first reading; but I imagined they might not refer to polished marble pillars, but to smooth lime or beech trees, which one may suppose to have been used as supporters in very rude buildings, and which would look smooth and shapely to

one not used to polished marble; and I imagine convenience taught the use of such supporters long before they were introduced as ornaments. The armour of steel could not occur to a poet who lived before the use of such armour. It is very strange that any poet who intended to make his poems pass as genuine, should use the name of Fingal, if no such king is to be found. Is it not possible, Fingal might be some powerful regent, during whose government there might be an invasion? which invasion, too, might not be a general affair sent out by the government of Denmark, but, perhaps only the gallantry of some adventurers. I can imagine, that the darkness of the times might cover and obscure many things, but I do not see how the poet could find steel armour where it did not exist. One should suppose, the subject of these poems was previous to any historical accounts, the manners are the most savage that is possible, the persons seem to have subsisted on hunting and fishing. There is not the least allusion to

any policy or civil government; in such a state there could be no history, but such records as these songs, of certain warlike achievements. I hear Lord Marchmont says, our old Highland bard is a modern gentleman of his acquaintance; if it be so, we have a living poet who may dispute the pas on Parnassus with Pindar and the greatest of the ancients, and I honour him for carrying the Muses into the country, and letting them step majestic over hills, mountains, and rivers, instead of tamely walking in the Park or Piccadilly. The Night Pieces are very fine, but far short, I think, of some of the first collection. If Mr. Thompson were alive, I should suspect they were his, they are so much of his turn. The hind who raises her head on hearing the wind whistle through the horns of the stag, and lies down again and sleeps, puts me much in mind of Mr. Thompson, who never neglected any circumstance he had observed in his rural walks. The song of the chief differs finely from that of the mere bard. I find great difficulty in

believing or disbelieving the authenticity of these poems; would not a modern author have wrought up these fine images with the advantages of verse? would he have sent their skeleton so unclothed and bare into the world? the Bishop of Ossory tells me, Mr. Macpherson receives an £100. per annum, subscription, while he stays in the Highlands to translate the poems; if he is writing them, he should have a thousand at least.

I complained in my last of a pain in my face, and I grew so ill for want of rest, that I sent for our famous Dr. Askew, who has given me a medicine which has done me great service.

Dr. Gregory in talking of Mr. Hume, said he had great respect for your Lordship. The dialogue of Bayle and Locke, could not be agreeable to him. I imagine the essays your Lordship likes, are on moral and political subjects: his metaphysical ones appear to me far finer than cobwebs. Dr. Gregory says Mr. Hume told him he spent an evening with me at Mr. Ramsay's, and he had received very favourable impres-

sions of me, and, I find, said much more of me than I deserve. The Doctor told him I was not of his freethinking system, but Mr. Hume thinks that no fault in a woman.

I agree with your Lordship, that Ajax's return to reason is very fine and affecting to the highest degree, and no distress can be greater than his, except that of Tecmessa.

The letter you inclosed instead of the governor's, was part of one I wrote your Lordship; I would wish Mr. Lyttelton to consider Mrs. Macauley, as a protegée of the Archbishop of Canterbury's, but I am much obliged to his Excellency for his readiness to oblige me. Dr. Monsey is revenging my coquetry with Lord Bath, by an assiduous courtship of Miss Talbot, but he can no more be untrue to me, than the needle to the pole.

I am, your, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

From Lord Lyttelton

To Mrs. Montagu.

Hill-Street, October 31, 1760.

MADONNA,

ACCORDING to my promise I now write to tell you the news of the town; and it is with great pleasure that I can assure you all parties unite in the strongest expressions of zeal and affection for our young king, and approbation of his behaviour since his accession. He has shewn the most obliging kindness to *all* the royal family, and done every thing that was necessary to give his government quiet and unanimity in this difficult crisis. I have been told of some great and extraordinary marks of royal virtues in his nature, and royal wisdom in his mind, by those who do not flatter. There will be no changes in the ministry, and I believe few at court. The Duke of Newcastle hesitated some time, whether he should undertake his arduous office in a new reign, but he has yielded at last to the

earnest desire of the king himself, of the Duke of Cumberland, and of the heads of all parties and factions, even those who were formerly most hostile to him. His friend and mine, my Lord Hardwicke, has been most graciously talked to by the king in two or three audiences, and will, I doubt not, continue in the Cabinet Council with the weight and influence he ought to have there. All things will therefore go smoothly on, at least for some time, in our domestic affairs; but our foreign ones are, I fear, in such a condition, that the seventeen millions which we are to raise for the service of the next year, will hardly be able to set them right. Whether the *grand expedition* will go on, is matter of doubt. Lord George Sackville has been admitted to kiss the king's hand, and thus ends my *Gazette Extraordinary*. As for myself, I got well to town on Wednesday night, was at court on Thursday morning, was spoke to graciously by the king, and am told by every body that I grow fat. So with the good news I have told you, I should be happy enough, if I was not so

uneasy, as Monsey has made me, about your health. I find by your letter to him of the last post, that you are very ill. You must come southwards, or you cannot hope to be well. All your friends here wish you in Hill-street, as much for your sake as their own. I pray God you may be able to bear a winter journey after having been so much indisposed from the inclemency of the weather in the month of October. I have often told you that you are a mere hot-house plant, fine and r re, but incapable of enduring the cold of our climate, if you are not *housed* the first day that the white frosts come in.

I found Mrs. Pitt in pretty good health and spirits: she is *well-housed*, though she has left your palace in Hill-street: I don't despair that she may be enabled to keep her house warm.

I send you a packet from Monsey to keep up your spirits and amuse your pains, if they still continue, which God forbid. He has delighted me with the sight of some of your letters, as much as

I can be delighted when I fear you are ill; but even your wit has not power to remove the uneasiness produced by that fear, and much less his, though I am charmed with some parts of his letters, which are in his best style, as I believe you will think when you read them.

November 1. Since I wrote what is above, I have heard some more news, which I must add to my gazette. The king has opened his grandfather's will in presence of all the royal family, and it is said that the Duke of Cumberland is heir to the much greater part of what his Majesty had to dispose of, but that is much less than was supposed. The next best share is the Princess Emilia's. The sums are not mentioned.

Mr. Pitt has just had a new and very extraordinary mark of the affection of the city, in an inscription they have put upon the first stone of the new bridge. I would have sent it you with to day's paper in which it is printed, but somebody has stolen it out of my room, I believe my brother. You will see it in

the next Chronicle. It speaks of a certain *contagion* by which generals, admirals, armies, and fleets, catch valour and prudence from him, to the great benefit of our affairs. Adieu; I long impatiently to hear you are better, but dare not entertain any confident hope of it. I am ever with the most perfect respect and attachment,

Madam,

Your most obedient

and obliged humble servant,

LYTTELTON.

P. S. My most respectful compliments to Mr. Montagu.

From the Same to the Same.

Hill-street, November 5, Wednesday night, 1760.

A THOUSAND thanks to the good Madonna for her last letter, which eased my heart of as much anxiety as it almost ever felt for the health of a friend; and, since it has been quite cured of ambition, that heart can hardly know much pleasure or pain but in its sensations for those it loves. You ought to value me a little on this account: for in the present conjuncture there are, I believe, few hearts in this state. Private friendships are little thought of: all attention now goes to political connections. But those connections, God be thanked, are not *offensive* at present, being rather made to guard against future hostilities, than to begin any now. So, we shall have peace at home and war abroad.

If I were to write the History of my my own Times, I would transcribe into

it your character of the late king, and should thereby pay my debt of gratitude to his memory. I would only add to it, that it appears by several wills he has left, that he never had been such a hoarder of treasure as was generally supposed. And of what he had saved, this war has consumed so much, that he was able to leave no more to his three surviving children than thirty thousand pounds in equal proportions, and I have heard that the Duke has given up his to his sisters. Princess Emily is come to live in my brother's house, like a private woman. It is said that the Princess of Wales will not come to St. James's. The great court officers are not yet settled, but I believe it is certain that Lord Bute will be continued Groom of the Stole, and Lord Huntington Master of the Horse. It was expected that the latter would rather have been disgraced, than promoted to a cabinet office; but in a private audience he touched the good-nature of the king, and has the benefit of the general disposition of the times, to let nobody complain

or be discontented. The greatest difficulty is how to find an equivalent for my Lord Gower. Many changes are talked of on that account; but as I understand that nothing is fixed, I will not send you conjectures which may be falsified before my letter comes to you. The *vis imperii* is supposed to be in Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle; and I believe that their *vis unita* would be too strong for all opposition; but how long it will continue *unita* as much as it is now, or which of them would be most favoured by a third power, if they disagreed, time will shew.

Monsey has frighted you about Emin, as I see by your letter to him; but he tells me now that he is alive and got home to his father, from whence I presume he will go to some Indian Nabob or Raja, and then you may have the pleasure of tracing his marches on the banks of the Ganges, and over many regions, "where the gorgeous East showers on her kings barbaric pearls and gold." This is the fittest theatre for an adventurous hero to act in of any

now in the universe; and if he is succesful, large tribute of those pearls and gold will come to you. I hope you have had my letter from Hagley, upon the death of the king, as well as the short one inclosing my brother's about Mrs. Macauley. Pray let me have back the piece of your's I sent instead of that; for I keep all your letters for the benefit of my son. My daughter's genius I fear will not enable her to profit much by them; but your conversation, which you will let down to her pitch, may be of great service to her, and I hope she will have it when she comes to town in the spring, as you are so kind to offer me your assistance in smoothing and polishing her rustic virtues. It is with the mind as with the body: no culture can add an inch to its natural heighth, but it may be taught not to stoop beneath its proper stature, and to be amiable though not exalted.

The picture you have drawn of Hagley in the two lines you cite from Ariosto is so very like, that one would think you had taken it upon the spot: only the dis-

tant mountains give a dignity to the prospect, which it would want if *they* were not added to the soft and sweet scenes, the *culte pianure e delicati colli*, &c.

Your's &c.

LITTELTON.

From Lord Bath.

To Mrs. Montagu.

Wednesday, 10 o'clock, December, 1760.

MADAM,

I SUPPOSE you intended that I should return you the Bishop's letter, which I promise you no body has taken any copy of, nor have I done it myself, and I have shewn it but to two persons.

What a charming thing it is to be able to write with such vivacity and spirit, at past fourscore; and oppressed as he says with age and infirmities. But strange as that may be, I know a more extraordinary thing, and that is, of a person near the same age (but without infirmities indeed)

that is, at this instant, over head and ears in love. How does he wish he could write with as much spirited love to his mistress, as the Bishop does with loyalty to his master, with this difference only, the one wishes the contention of love may never be decided, the other hopes it may be brought to an *issue* as soon as possible, by the only proper means of determination; and let the posterity arising from thence, be a proof to future generations, of the ardency of the affection, of her

Most passionate adorer,

BATH.

To Lord Bath.

MY LORD.

I HAVE sent your Lordship back the Bishop of London's letter, which cannot be more honourably placed than in your cabinet. From an apprehension that this letter may be degraded by appearing in a magazine or chronicle, I was desirous to

communicate it to my friends, under such restraints as would secure me from blame in case of such an accident.

As I do not expect a billet-doux every morning, I was unluckily asleep (observe that I do not say not dreaming of my Lord Bath) when your letter arrived. I cannot express how much I admire your Lordship's parody of a Bishop's pastoral letter. As I have yet got but half way towards the ardours of fourscore, your Lordship will not expect I should immediately comply with your proposal; but if you will be content with a sentimental love till I arrive at the tender age of eighty, a person and a passion so ripened by time must be very yielding. And according to the latest reckoning of the learned and ingenious Mr. Whiston, the millennium will then commence, so that we may have a proper period in which to prove our constancy and love; and, at a moderate computation, may produce a thousand of those proofs of it which your Lordship seems to think the best testimony. I am now very much, but at the

commencement of the next century, hope to be entirely

Your's,

E. MONTAGU.

I hope your Lordship will not forget your engagement on Sunday, for I have been interrupted in my letter by a visit from a very pretty man of five and twenty, whose conversation is so far from the spirit of your Lordship's letter, that I cannot but be tired of the insipidity of these young people.

From Lord Bath

To Mrs. Montagu.

December, 1760.

MADAM,

I HAVE sent you some game, which I hope to partake with you to-morrow.

Indeed, Madam, you are too cruel to desire to postpone my happiness till the beginning of next century. I can die

for the lady I love, any day she pleases to command me; but to live forty years for her, is more than I can promise; besides, Madam, I would have you consider, that in all the conquests Love makes, there is, on the male side, constantly a little pride and vanity; do you think that I have not something of that kind, in the pleasure I propose to myself of making Mr. Montagu jealous, and of triumphing, and insulting over Dr. Monsey: and can you, yourself, promise me either of these forty years hence? in conscience, therefore, reduce the horrid period of forty years, to twenty at most, and tell me in your next, Come twenty years hence, and be happy. But all you promise in your letter is, that the beginning of next century perhaps you may begin to listen. This is cold proceeding, with an impetuous lover of fourscore, who is impatient to convince you how much he loves you, and how passionately he is

Your's for the remainder of the millennium whenever it begins,

BATH.

To Lord Bath.

Past eleven, Saturday morn, 1760-1.

My Lord,

I THANK your Lordship much for your game, and still more for your letter; and I can justify that taste upon the best principles of epicureanism.

I really think I cannot be too much upon my guard against a lover, who at once strikes off twenty years in his suit; such vehemence and violence alarms me. Had your Lordship begged off the twenty years by five years at a time, I really think you had prevailed. You say, my Lord, that at the end of forty years I promise only to listen; I appeal to your own experience, and the report of others, whether ever the woman who listened to a lover, only listened. However, I forgive your Lordship this mistake for the justness with which you place all pride and vanity in love conquests on the male side; as to Dr. Monsey, I have reason to hope he has already broke his heart. Mr. Montagu

lives in that state of ignorance from whence arises much of the felicity of the conjugal state, and I am willing he should live till the millennium draws a little nearer. I am very sensible that happy period comes nearer every day, by the increasing tenderness with which I am,

My Lord,

your Lordship's

most devoted,

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Vesey.

I WISH Monsey was hanged, and then embowelled, and stuffed with rhubarb. A poor doggrel wit, who has no goût for the Epick, is determined to keep away the Son of the Song from our Feast of Shells. I am convinced that your note will bring Ossian himself, and he will play upon Æolus's harp while we are at dinner; the vulgar will think it is the wind, but we shall know it is the bard of

Morven. I could have made a rhubarb tart for Mr. Vesey, and have put a good custard upon it, a better preparation than Monsey's, who, in the bitterness of his jealousy, has given this untimely dose. I depend on seeing my dear Mrs. Vesey, and I hope that will break the Doctor's heart. I know it is a hard heart, but it may therefore be the more brittle. It would please me as well if he would break his neck, and no bard should raise the song on his tomb, but apes should grin, and monkeys chatter, and magpies talk, and all the half-wits in nature haunt it. His name should never be written but in an anagram or an acrostic, which witlings should whistle through the void of sense and reason till punsters caught the sound.

Your's, &c.

E. Montagu.

From Lord Bath

To Mrs. Montagu.

MADAM,

YOUR eastern lover, (whose letter I enclose,) outdoes all us poor European adorers, in flights and lofty expressions. He has the sun, moon, heaven, and stars, to call to his aid, whenever he has a mind to compare you to any of them. But we poor humble lovers must be content with low descriptions of our passion, by talking of flames, darts, and such poor terrestrial allusions. But I can by no means allow him the privilege of comparing you to the King of Prussia. He is the cause of murdering thousands and thousands of poor mortals every year, perhaps you could do as much mischief, if you had as cruel a heart; but instead of that, you suffer for every body's misfortunes, as well as your own, and no friend or acquaintance of yours, can have the headach, or the least pain, that you do not feel it as much as they. Think, dear

Madam, how grievously a certain person must suffer for the tediousness of the time between this and the millennium. Is the Roman Catholic doctrine true, that we must remain some time in purgatory, before we can get into paradise?

To Lord Bath.

My Lord,

As I never could keep a secret in my life I must have leave to tell your Lordship that I rejoice very sincerely to find your anxieties on account of the expedition are at an end. The honour of the enterprize, all the praise of noble daring, remains to Lord Pulteney, and the danger is removed, so I hope your paternal affections are perfectly satisfied and happy. I will now own to your Lordship, that I have felt a great deal of uneasiness for you ever since I heard you were to hazard an only son in this expedition, and the more as I think your Lordship almost

put him under a necessity of going into the army; for having made it in a manner impossible for him to equal you in the fame and glory of civil life, he was obliged to take the military road to honour: as he could not expect so many garlands from the hand of Minerva, it was noble in his Lordship to turn to the stern god of war, and seek the glory reaped in the iron harvest of the field. That this affair ends so honourably and happily gives great joy to your friends; and as I found you intended going out of town for the holidays, I imagined I might not have an opportunity of offering my congratulations, and of assuring your Lordship that I wish every year may end, and every new one begin, with some event agreeable to your wishes, and that for me, you will do so much as to believe no one takes a more sincere joy in your happiness than, my Lord,

Your Lordship's, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

P. S. Letters of congratulation do not

require any answer, especially such as are wrote by those unworthy persons who have not produced any heroes to fight for their country.

From Lord Bath

To Mrs. Montagu.

December the 15th, 1760.

MADAM,

I BEG leave (though you forbid me) to return you ten thousand thanks for your kind congratulation to me, on the laying aside the intended expedition. Your goodness and great humanity for me, and my son, claims my sincerest acknowledgments, and yet I cannot help complaining of some hard-heartedness another way. How can so much tenderness and compassion, subsist at the same time, with so much coldness and cruelty, in the same breast?

I will own the truth to you, Madam,

that the anxieties I felt on my son's account are now pretty well over; perhaps when a gust of wind has blown with more violence than ordinary, I have felt a pang or so upon his account; but for the dangers he may incur in his profession, I have laid all those fears aside. When he first strenuously solicited me for leave to go into the army, then I felt all the pains and anxieties that a tender parent could suffer; but when he had extorted my consent from me, it was then ridiculous to be tormenting myself with the apprehension of dangers his profession must necessarily lead him into. If he was tomorrow to go upon the attack of a counterscarp, I should consider it as his duty, and be pleased to see the resolution and alacrity with which he undertook it, and never think of the dangers he run, but please myself with the glory and honour he would obtain from his courage. Life in all of us is a very precarious and uncertain thing: and how can it be risqued by any one, better, than in the service of

one's country? Notwithstanding all the hazards he may in his whole life run, I hope, and believe too, he may live to be as old as his father, nay, what is more, perhaps he may be (like him too) a lover at fourscore; I dare say he will not want inclination to be so. Objects indeed are not always found capable of kindling a flame in an old breast of eighty. There must be many things beside beauty to light up such a fire. I will not pretend to enumerate all the accomplishments necessary for such a purpose, because I know the description might offend you. In your postscript you seem to grieve, Madam, that a certain person has not yet produced any heroes for the service of their country. How can such a thought enter into your head, after postponing a certain offer, for the tedious term of twenty years. It is a most terrible time to wait, but God be thanked, a fortnight of the time is now over, for the remainder of it, old Nestor will wait with patience, and be a faithful, ardent, and constant

adorer till the time comes, of his being allowed to subscribe himself your happy lover,

BATH.

To Mrs. Carter.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BEFORE you read the enclosed I advise you to dip your fingers in cold plantain juice, or to draw on a pair of gloves made of the fire-defying asbestos, for there is so much warmth and flame in the epistle it will otherwise blister your fingers ends. Our noble friend with a good nature peculiar to himself, is impatient for your coming to town, because he thinks we are happy when we are together. He asked me often if there were no means to be hit upon to bring you to London before January. I told his Lordship I feared it was impossible; he pressed again what I told you of before, and thought

of all expedients; but as I imagined you staid on account of your father, I was forced to acquiesce in this long separation. My Lord Bath says he thinks he has now found out something that will bring you to us directly, which is, that I am to tell you, he will be the most ardent, importunate, dangerous lover in the world till you come to town, after that he will settle into a very sincere friend; so for conscience sake, and my sake, you must come and protect me. I find my Lord has told you he spent six days here, the only time I ever knew him exaggerate an obligation he conferred, for indeed he was here only four whole days and two half ones. I need not tell you that the hours passed as gaily as those Guido has harnessed to Aurora's car. Dr. Monsey was in great spirits, his character contrasts finely with my Lord Bath's; his Lordship's talents, like colours in the prism, formed of the brightest rays, are so well arranged, and so happily mingled, that though strong and vivid they never pain the sight. The Doctor's

understanding is like Harlequin's coat, gay, not only from the different colours that compose it, but from the heterogeneous jumble in which they lie, running at once from black to white, from red to blue. I believe the Doctor's mother longed for a merry Andrew, and marked the child. I think I never saw him in such spirits as in this visit; every moment brought forth a new story, in which wit and nonsense were so perfectly mixed and incorporated, that I defy the best chemist to separate and analyse them. I am now left to amuse myself for the rest of the time we shall spend here, the weather does not seem to promise my solitude shall be diversified by wandering about the fields and woods,

Di riposo, e di pace alberghi veri,

but I am weary enough of the hurly-burly of this world to be thankful for a few hours of blank silence and quiet, without requiring the voice of Philomel to soothe my ear, or beautiful scenes to amuse my eyes. I can always catch the notes of

the Mantuan swan, or gather the flowers of rhetoric which grew on the banks of the Tyber, as I sit by my fireside, so for amusements I am pretty well, but in every other respect I am in a mere dream, separated from all my living friends and acquaintance, and conversing with shadows. If it was in my power to be of real use, and exist more substantially to my poor neighbours, I should not think this kind of life much amiss; though I should still feel very sensibly the absence of my dear Mrs. Carter and some others, and not the best Oration of Demosthenes, could I read him in his native Greek, would make amends to me for the loss of my Lord Bath's company, or Lucian's Dialogues stand in the place of Monsey's stories; there are some living geniuses of my acquaintance whom I read, and some dead authors whom I love. There is requisite a certain degree of goodness and benevolence in a character however great or ingenious, to make us feel a kind of interest without which every thing appears faint and languid: where affection

is united with admiration, and esteem with delight, there the heart and head are pleased and contented, and one feels a joy books cannot communicate.

I am sorry for your tremors and trepidations, but they are mere nervous disorders, and the manuscript must be printed; so, my dear Urania, away with your lamentations, sit down, revise, correct, augment, print, and publish. I am sure you will have a pleasure in communicating the pious, virtuous sentiments that breathe in all your verses. My inferior soul will feel a joy in your producing such proofs of genius to the world; let it see that all your advantages are not derived from study. The envious may say you brought your wisdom from Athens, your wit is your own. The tuneful Nine are not found in a library, they inhabit a temple of their own: atqui sic à summis hominibus eruditissimisque accepimus, cæterarum rerum studia, et doctrina, et præceptis, et arte constare; poetam natura ipsa valere, et mentis viribus excitari, et quasi divino quodam spiritu inflari. To

every thing you can say in plain prose, I shall be unmoved as a rock. Rocks themselves have been moved by the strains of Orpheus, send me therefore a copy of verses to dissuade me from the point in question, and I will——send you them back again to be printed in the collection. The very best of your poetical productions have never been published, they may indeed have been seen by a few in manuscript, but the finest things in sheets are soon lost;

foliis tantum ne carmina manda;
Ne turbata volent rapidis ludibria ventis;

print them and bind them fast, I beg you.

I protest you are very cruel to insult me with your Greek. Reading Xenophon! happy creature! very many years ago I read an Italian translation of Thucydides which I much admired; I believe he was dressed à la Grecque at least. I have since seen him in a good genteel French habit, and lastly in the stiff buckram robe of an English pedant. However my countryman might alter Thucydides, I am sure he did not soften him; the grating

of a rusty iron hinge is melody to the falling of his periods.

I was glad to find by pressing Dr. Monsey to confess whether he really had been angry with me, that he laid it to heart we had not taken him into our party when we retired after dinner at Mount Ephraim. I assured him it was not in my power, as Mr. Montagu would have thought it an impolitesse to him. The Doctor said he wished to have talked to us on some serious subjects: he seems in earnest to follow his good purposes, but even his penitential habit must be adorned with Harlequin's wooden sword; if there is no mischief left there must be some idle flourishes. I ought to have sent my Lord Bath's letter to you by Tuesday's post, but many letters and the headach have interposed two posts. My Lord Bath is in London, so thither you may direct your answer to his letter, and I have confessed that I detained it. I must tell you Monsey gave us the second part of Crab on Tuesday, he whooped and hallooed when the chaise came to the door

most unmercifully. The Doctor's may be truly called animal spirits; I wish mine were proof against the parting and absence of my friends, but they rise and fall as reason bids them. When again shall I open a door with the joy I used to do when a certain person stood at the keyhole ready to come forth? The constant clock strikes eight at the same hour, and I say to it,

Tu torni ben, ma teco
Non tornano i sereni
E fortunati dì delle mie gioje:
Tu torni ben, tu torni;
Ma teco altro non torna,
Che del perduto mio caro tesoro
La rimembranza misera e dolente.

But fie! January will come. Are you not amazed at Mr. P. for throwing up the seals just before the meeting of a new parliament? I pity the young King, who, in the season of life made for cheerfulness and most exempt from care, has such a weight thrown upon him as the government at present. Dangers alarm the experienced, but must amaze and

terrify the inexperienced. I am sorry you do not use exercise, I hate your plain-work.

My dear Madam,

your's, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

Sandleford, June 23, 1761.

DEAR MADAM,

I TOLD you in my last, that I was going to take a flight into Berkshire; and here I have been ever since Friday evening, leading a pastoral life in the finest weather I ever saw. Though the most sage Horace says, we change our climate without changing our disposition, I must be of another opinion, for by only the difference of latitude and longitude between Hill-street and Sandleford, I am become one of the most reasonable, quiet, good kind of country gentlewomen that ever was. In the days when misses employed their crimping and wimpling irons upon cheese-

cakes and tarts, not on flounces and furbelows, and matrons used no rouge, but a little cochineal to give a fine colour to a dried neat's tongue, they could not be further from the temper, qualities, and conditions of a fine lady than your humble servant at this present writing. My health is much improved by the country air; I saunter all day, and when Phœbus sets in the material world, he rises in the intellectual; then I sit down to read what he has inspired, and I find the amusements of the day here prepare me well for my evening's lecture. At this season the whole scenery of the country is poetical, every hill is Parnassus, for there the Muses sit; and every stream pours Helicon; to all indeed is not given the poetry of the head, but certainly all feel it at the heart, and the pleasures of a fine summer's day give a joy more sublime, more elegant, and more harmonious, than any thing else; other pleasures are plain, domestic, and prosaic, not so gently flowing, or so sweet. The mention of poetry puts me in mind to tell you I am very

well satisfied with the share of praise you give to Cowley. He had a rich vein of thought, but being too ostentatious of it, we are disgusted at the proud display of his treasures, as at the pomp of a rich man, when it goes beyond the bounds modesty and a sound judgment should set to it. I agree with you that his love verses are insufferable; I think you and I, who have never been in love, could describe it better, were we asked *what is it like?* I think some of his translations from Anacreon very pretty, and the verses by the God of love in honour of Anacreon are very pretty, though a little too long. I think you were too temperate in your commendations of La Mort d'Abel. I was infinitely delighted with it as a work of genius. On your recommendation I lent it to my Lord Lyttelton, who sent it back with great approbation. But to be sincere, in spite of you both, some silly prejudices against the author, and the language the poem was originally written in, a little damped my expectation, and the beginning in which he imitates Milton, with all

the faintness of reflected beams, made me advance very soberly. But what a feast is the patriarchal dinner? How sweetly innocent their manners! Eve's horror at the first storm, her surprise at Adam's fastening up the mouth of the cave, concern at the first sight of death, which is finely supposed to seize a dove, because in that animal only could the grief of a surviving friend be shewn, with ten thousand other circumstances, in her's and Adam's narration, all so natural and yet so new, that I must call Mr. Gesner a poet! A poet should create, but he should not make monsters; I think our author has not the sublime, but his genius suits his subject. What a noble piety! what a purity of heart in Abel! and how finely is his character contrasted with Cain's! Abel's are virtues of disposition and temper in a great degree, and so are Cain's vices, which is rightly imagined in a state of life where example and discipline could not have so much influence as in larger society and more mixed life. Milton's and Mr. Gesner's pastoral scenes are so

ennobled and refined by religion, that the shepherds and shepherdesses who worship the wanton Pan and drunken Silenus make a mean figure when compared to them. I agree with you in liking Mr. Gesner's Pastorals extremely, but let him still keep to the more than the golden age of the poets. I would fain propose to him, to take the story of Joseph next. He has a fine genius for drama; the last three books of Abel make a noble tragedy. Did not you drop a tear at the lamentation of Cain's children over Abel's body? Il ne se reveillera plus! Il ne se reveillera plus! how simple! how natural! how affecting! What a witchcraft is there in words! repeat, il est mort, it is nothing; but the simplicity of the children who had not a name for death, and the words at once signifying the circumstance, is very touching. I desire you would permit Abel to stay with you, for if you had been born at the same time I should have taken you for twins. I have taken a house at Tunbridge from the 3d of July, and I hope

my dear friend will be ready to come to me.

I am, &c. &c.

E. M.

To the Same.

It is an age since I wrote to my dear friend. Your last letter found me in Northumberland so teized with the toothach I was not able to write. I have been since at Lambeth, and Miss Talbot has been at my door, but we have not met. My health is very good, but my mind has been in an uneasy state for this fortnight for Admiral Boscawen, who has had a very bad fever; he is now, we hope, out of danger; the letters yesterday brought an account of his amendment. Mrs. Boscawen's happiness and the welfare of her children depend on the life of the Admiral, so you may believe it is a great object to me, and I could not settle my mind to any thing while the alarm was strong. Thank God we have better hopes than we

had; but it would be too much to say he is out of danger.

I suppose you have some curiosity to know how things go on in this new reign, but we are neither of us fond of nice political discussions, so I will content myself with saying in general that our young monarch gives us the fairest hopes of a happy reign. There is a decency and dignity in his character that could not be expected at his years; mildness and firmness mixed, religious sentiments and a moral conduct unblemished, application to business, affability to every one; no biass to any particular party or faction, sound and serious good sense in his conversation, and an elevation of thought and tenderness of sentiment. There hardly passes a day in which one does not hear of something he has said or done which raises one's opinion of his understanding and heart. Envy and jealousy take alarm at the affection and regard he shews to Lord Bute, but in my opinion it does great honour to a young monarch to shew more affection to the man

who certainly has formed his mind and manners, (a thing to be done only by grave advice and serious lessons) than to idle and gay companions of his own age; and while we rejoice that the King is so happily formed for his great situation, should we repine at any reward the person may have who has had so great a share in accomplishing him? By what has appeared in the King's conduct we may see the days he passed with Lord Bute were not lost. I am sure you will be pleased with what the King said upon hearing a flattering sermon from Dr. Wilson, one of the court chaplains: his Majesty desired the chaplains might be told that he came to church to hear God praised, not himself. The regards with which his Majesty has behaved to all the royal family, shows a generous and gentle disposition, and the whole of his conduct, that he is what few kings are, a man; for though these mighty personages are not ague-proof, they seldom have those sensations that are felt by people who are not placed in the solitary niche of imperial power, and rarely do

they share human affections or feel human ties. I never expected to say so much about a king; I respect their office so much I should not love to expatiate on their faults, and few give occasion to enlarge on their virtues. Thank Heaven that ours is not like his brother of Prussia, a hero, a wit, and a free-thinker; for in the disposition of the present times, we should soon have seen the whole nation roaring blasphemy, firing cannon, and jesting away all that is serious, good, and great. Religious as this young monarch is, we have reason to hope God will protect him from the dangers of his situation, and make him the means of bringing back that sense of religion and virtue, which has been wearing off for some generations. Lady Frances Williams is at Bath, and a good deal indisposed with the spasms in her stomach. I long to hear that your health is better. Let me know if you want any books to amuse you.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Carter.

September the 6th, 1761.

I HAVE three letters of my dear friend's unanswered, but will not prodigally spend all the pleasures of reply in one; so I shall only answer your two first this post, and reserve the last to another. How much I felt your kind disposition to turn back when you were on the stairs, I cannot express to you in words; there started a tear on reading that paragraph which declared the sentiment better. Words serve well for common occasions, but there are so many on which they cannot explain the movements of the heart, and the delicate feelings of the soul, that in a state of natural religion only, it would have helped to have convinced me of our being to exist in another life, in which we should not use an inadequate interpreter of our thoughts, as language is. Thought is of the soul, language belongs to body; we shall leave it in the grave

with our other rags of mortality. My head turns round when I would tell you what I have been doing since I came to town. I have been in so many places, I have seen so many people, I have been so idle and so busy, that to explain it all would be worse than the fine ladies amusement of picking gold and silver lace; and less would be the reward, for they pick out much precious metal; few golden threads could I separate and extract. The Destinies will say they spun them off at Tunbridge. If they were not deaf, I would tell them they twirled their distaff with great rapidity there; now it turns slower than the hinder wheel of my Lord Mayor's state coach. I was in great hopes of seeing our Queen sailing up the Thames with more majesty than Amphitrite ever appeared; when, lo! this morning news is brought that her Majesty is landed at Yarmouth. The whole town is in a bustle to-night, because she is to arrive to-morrow. I am alone in my dressing room, doubly tasting the joys of quiet, by comparing myself

with those who are in agitation. In my youthful days of ambition, I should have liked well enough to have had a share in its great pursuits; and if I had been married to some choice spirit, I fear I should have rather animated than restrained its course, but never could I have made any great business of drawing room attendance. I hate such pantomime entertainment. If I could weave a garland of eternal love and joy for our royal pair, I should be very busy. I wish our amiable King all possible happiness for his own sake and his people's. The character of the Queen will have great influence on the morals of the people. His Majesty's example must have happy consequences on them, and I hope she will join with him in making piety and virtue fashionable.

Mr. Emin intended setting forward for Russia yesterday, but by some delays of Lord Northumberland's, he must wait for another ship. Delay throws heroism into convulsions, he is uneasy and agitated; how things will end I do not know. His

intentions are noble, so far is well. I have not told you that my Lord Bath has sat twice for his picture, it will be very like him but not so handsome; as long as he lives I shall look on it with pleasure, always with reverence. I went with Mrs. Pitt to Lambeth yesterday, and found Miss Talbot and Mrs. Talbot very well. I propose to go to Langley to see Lady Frances Coningsby to-morrow; she has got Lady Essex's children with her, and I understand they are to live with her, which makes her very happy; for disappointment in one object only drives people to another, which is undoubtedly wisely ordered, that we may never sink into indolence, and withdraw from the duties of life. I will own I often feel myself so weary of my journey through this world, as to wish for mere rest, a quiet sabbath after my working days, but when such time shall come, perhaps some painful infirmity may find my virtue employment; but all this I leave to him who knows what is best. "Thousands at his

bidding post o'er sea and land, they also serve who wait." Whatever I ought to do, I shall know he would have me to do, but if late in life I should be busy from mere choice, pray chide my ill-timed activity, and send me to my easy chair by the fireside. Dr. Evelyn dined here to-day, he gives me hopes Mrs. Boscawen will come to-morrow. I am ashamed, sadly ashamed of my behaviour about Dr. Young's poem. The affair was thus: my Lord Bath going to Iver Place, I lent him my copy of the poem. Lady Pomfret who was here on Saturday morning wished to read it, I had been obliged to her Ladyship for so many books I could not refuse it, *and so* I did a wrong thing by you, partly because I thought you would forgive me, which makes the case worse. It is all your fault however. Did not I tell you I should not be good for any thing when you left me? We have not fixed our day for going to Sandleford, but I believe it will be on Saturday or Monday next. The coronation is put off

to the 6th of October. I think you will find many fine stanzas in Dr. Young's work.

I am, my dearest friend,
ever entirely yours,
E. MONTAGU.

P. S. I have opened my letter to tell you the Queen is not arrived, and perhaps not landed; whether she is to be in town to-night or not is a state secret. I was prevented going to Langley by bad weather. I am not without hopes of still seeing the Queen sail up the silver Cydnus.

To her Husband.

Thursday.

MY DEAREST,

I WAS much rejoiced to find from your letter yesterday, that you were quite free from complaint. I have not got any cold or mischief from the coronation: at half

an hour after four I got into the coach, went by Fulham to Lambeth, from whence I crossed the water in a boat which landed me at the Cofferer's office, where I was to see the show. I had a perfect view of the procession to and from Westminster to the Abbey, and I must say it rather exceeded my expectation. The ladies made a glorious appearance; wherever there was any beauty of countenance, or shape, or air, they were all heightened by the dress. Lady Talbot was a fine figure. The King had all the impressions of decent satisfaction and goodnatured joy in his face, looked about him with great complacency, and tried to make himself as visible as he could to the mob, but the canopy carried over his Majesty's head, and the persons who carried his train made him not so conspicuous. His behaviour at the Abbey pleased much. It was perfectly dark before the procession returned from the Abbey, so we lost the second view. I got into a barge, and got to the coach which waited at York Buildings, and I came home without the least

difficulty. Mr. Botham and his daughters are just gone. Lord Lyttelton was near fainting away just as the procession set out from the Hall, and was obliged to sit down to take drops till a chair could be got to carry him home. Lady Albemarle fainted presently after. Lord Grantham was ill, but able to go through the ceremony. The early hour the peers and peeresses are forced to rise at, the weight of their robes, and all the whole affair is fatiguing, but they make a good figure, for there is something very majestic in the dress.

I believe my Lord Bath will come down to us about Wednesday, or perhaps Tuesday. I shall be at Sandleford on Monday. Mr. de Bussy set out I believe to-day. No hopes of a peace. We had a bright sunshine during the procession. Lady Carysfort says she must see me, so I must take leave. Ever your's

with all gratitude, esteem,
and affection,
E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

September, 1761.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I DID not get the least harm from the hurry of the coronation, nor any cold on the water. My pleasure was imperfect because you did not share it; if I could have imagined it would not have been attended with hazard and fatigue I should certainly have importuned you much to be of the party: from selfish motives alone I had great reason to wish for you, as the only person who would see the ceremony in the same points of view as myself. I should choose you as a companion equally whether the object to be considered were a rising sun, or a young monarch walking to his coronation. To you and to me these objects are equally a matter of calm speculation. The newspapers will tell you enough of the order of the procession, and the splendor of the day, but it is impossible to say enough

of the behaviour of the King. During the procession his countenance expressed a benevolent joy in the vast concourse of people and their loud acclamations, but there was not the least air of pride or insolent exultation. In the religious offices his Majesty behaved with the greatest reverence and deepest attention; he pronounced with earnest solemnity his engagement to his people, and when he was to receive the sacrament he pulled off his crown. How happy that in the day of the greatest worldly pomp, and adorned with the ensigns of regal power, he should remember his duty to the King of kings! Alas! how would but a smile of his Majesty make half his subjects for a day forget their Creator, and him whose kingdom is not of this world! When I consider how little this nation seems to deserve such a king, I am afraid he should be taken from us. What felicity may we not hope, if we are governed by a sovereign who submits his will to that of the Supreme Governor, and takes for rules of his conduct those divine laws infinite

mercy has given weak mortality for its guide! Many things in the ceremonies of the coronation were not well ordered, but there his Majesty shewed presence of mind, a ready memory, and a patient temper. With great propriety and good humour he instructed the heralds in their office, and the peers in their duty. The people shewed the most affectionate regard to their Majesties as they passed along, and one may truly say when the eye saw them it blessed them. I hear the Queen has a most amiable disposition, and I believe one may say, in vulgar phrase, they will be a happy couple.

I called on Miss Talbot yesterday, and I find she has written to you. The Archbishop pleased much in the coronation ceremony. I am indeed grieved at the heart for Mrs. Chapone. All calamities are light in comparison of the loss of what one loves uniquement. After that dear object is lost, the glories of the golden day are for ever overcast, and there is no tranquillity under the silent moon; the soft and quiet pleasures are

over business may employ and diversions amuse the mind, but *the soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy* can never be retrieved. Mrs. Chapone has great virtues, and if she has the martyr's sufferings, will have the martyr's reward. I begin to think the violence parents often do to their children's inclinations, in the affair of marriage, to be in the end very happy for the poor slave tied in involuntary bondage. How easy is the task of submitting to the caprices of a master! In comparison of the sorrows of the heart the vexations of the mind are nothing. What can pierce the sevenfold shield of patience and duty? but the barbed arrows of esteem and love, if they inflict any wound, it must be terrible: but most terrible it is when by death the object of affection is taken away. Compared to that, remediless afflictions, the pangs of jealousy and the insults of indifference must be felicity. I had written thus much of my letter before dinner. I have since had the pleasure of seeing my Lord Bath, indeed he had the goodness to spend

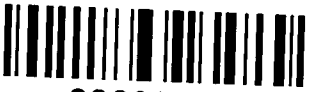
the whole evening with me. He enquired kindly after you, and wishes for your coming to town. I wish you could have seen his Lordship to-night, he looks so young and so well it would surprise you, better even than at Tunbridge: but in spite of these blooming looks, sometimes the thought comes across me that he is 77, and then I think my Lady Abercorn is wiser than we are, who makes him of her card party only, we alas, put him high in the list of our felicities. I am to set out for Sandleford to-morrow morning. My Lord Bath comes to us on Thursday. Adieu, my dear friend, let me hear from you soon.

I am, your's,

E. Montagu.

END OF VOL. IV.

Printed by W. Bulmer and Co.
Cleveland Row, St. James's.


00099657

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016